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WITHER BOSNIA?: THE MAKING OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY  
OVER THE BALKANS, 1991-1994

By  
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BALKANS, 1991-1994

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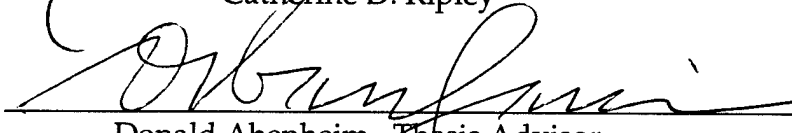
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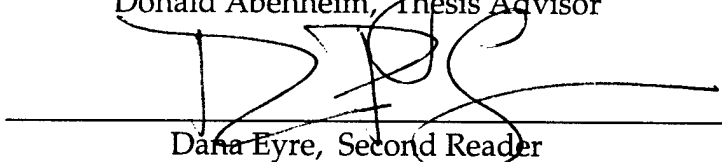
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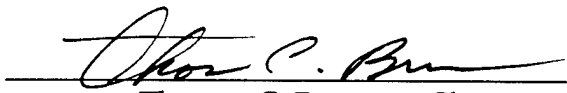
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of the American public debate in shaping U.S. foreign policy in the war in the former Yugoslavia. The debate over intervention in the current Balkan war evolved between 1991-1993, from concerns over struggling democracies into those of humanitarian obligations. The study begins with an illustration of the complexities of the current war, with a look at history, politics and personalities. The study then examines the actors who have participated in the public debate over U.S. policy in the Balkans. Focusing on the Bosnian phase of the war, the Bush and Clinton administrations are examined for their roles in contributing to the resolution of the war and the humanitarian effort. The roles of the media, Congress, the world community, the Executive Branch of U.S. government, and the President of the U.S, are examined closely for their impact on shaping U.S. actions through public debate. In summary, the study concludes that because U.S. foreign policy is directly influenced by the American public debate, the timeliness of the evolution of the debate plays a critical role in cases of foreign intervention in regional and ethno-national conflicts.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines the evolution of public debate over the current war in the former Yugoslavia. It begins with a discussion of the complexities of Balkan history as it relates to the current conflict. The historic events and periods which are addressed include: the Battle of Kosova and Ottoman domination; the "Eastern Question" of the nineteenth century; the creation of Yugoslavia; World War II and the Civil War; and the Tito era. The overview of Balkan history is discussed in order to set the stage for the motivation for public debate.

The study concentrates on the five principle actors involved in the public debate. They are grouped as:

- public opinion and the media
- the world community
- Congress
- the Executive branch of government
- the President

These actors were grouped in this manner to provide a systematic approach of research through mainstream periodical literature, major U.S. newspapers, Gallup opinion polls, Congressional records, U.S. Department of State Dispatches, and Presidential speeches.

The study provides information on how the actors involved in public debate reacted to events in the war in the former Yugoslavia, and how those reaction affected U.S. foreign policy decisions. The graphs provided in the appendices are presented to offer a visual illustration of the major issues discussed by the actors, which include:

- the concern for struggling new democracies in Yugoslavia

- the issue of humanitarian aid
- the issue of "ancient hatreds" as the cause for conflict in the Balkans
- the "ethnic cleansing" campaign and genocide
- the debate over intervention versus non-intervention

The issues are discussed and examined to determine the dynamic nature of the public debate and the changes in focus of interest between 1991 and 1993.

The empirical research of the specific arguments made during the public debate reveal a distinct change in attitude after the news article concerning Nazi-style concentration camps and ethnic cleansing was written by Roy Gutman in August 1992. The public debate put aside arguments about "ancient hatreds" and struggling democracies and concentrated on the humanitarian issue after knowledge of the "ethnic cleansing" campaign became worldwide.

The public debate over critical foreign policy issues plays a major role in the decision-making process of the U.S. government. An assessment of U.S. participation in resolving the Yugoslav war may contribute to U.S. foreign policy decisions in the future.

The debate over intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina evolved over time and played a significant role in influencing limited U.S. humanitarian intervention.

The potential for conflict similar to the one which has consumed the former Yugoslavia, is ever present in the dynamic environment of the post-Cold War world. The ideological struggle in the bi-polar situation of the Cold War no longer drives U.S. foreign interests. Because of this, the U.S. is hesitant to intervene in situations before weighing national interests and domestic approval. However, as champions of democracy and human rights, humanitarian tragedies such as Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti has lead

the public debate towards the support of limited military and diplomatic intervention overseas. The study of the current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina provides insight on the changing role of the U.S. in regional and ethnic disputes in future conflicts across the globe.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The destruction of Yugoslavia is a warning that the post-Cold War world is still threatened by war. The end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union gave Americans a sudden sense of security--albeit a false one. But the celebration ended as suddenly as it had begun and the leaders of the United States (U.S.) had to decide what role their government would assume in the face of conflict. According to President George Bush in his 1991 State of the Union address, the U.S. would "continue to lead in support of freedom everywhere--not out of arrogance, and not out of altruism, but for the safety and security of our children."<sup>1</sup>

However, several factors are inherently involved in shaping U.S. foreign policy decisions. One of the major influences on American foreign policy is public debate over controversial issues. This thesis will examine the evolution and nature of the public debate over the war in the former Yugoslavia.

The reality of the brave "new world order"--of which President Bush spoke of during his State of the Union Address-- quickly forced the U.S. to reassess its responsibility as the only remaining superpower when conflict arose in the former Yugoslavia. Cold War diplomatic and military doctrines had to be redesigned to match the requirements of the changing world. The neatly packaged foreign policy doctrine articulated in National Security Council (NSC) 68,<sup>2</sup> would no longer suffice in the new multi-polar world

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<sup>1</sup>For full transcript of President Bush's "State of the Union Address," see Congressional Records, January 1991.

<sup>2</sup>The first comprehensive statement of a national strategy was published as NSC 68 by the U.S. State Department. Paul Nitze served as primary author and editor of this document, which

containing such diverse conflicts as those in Eastern Europe and Africa. This "new world order" called for new foreign policy doctrines, yet none emerged.

Although the Cold War ended suddenly, the western powers did not plan for the numerous and diverse situations that lay ahead. There were no international conferences or treaties to announce the ground rules for a new order as there had been in every major international juncture in the past: World War I had the Treaties of Versailles, Saint-Germain, Neuilly, Trianon, and Sevres; World War II had the Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco, Potsdam and Paris Conferences which gave birth to the United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The post-Cold War world faces new frontiers without the aid of conferences or treaties.

The world is without order and the struggling new democratic states of Eastern Europe are disillusioned by unmet hopes to become westernized and welcomed into the European Community of prosperous nations. Without the support and guidance of established western democracies, the fate of these desperate states is left to a handful of leftover communists aspiring to control economically devastated and poorly managed countries. In the case of Yugoslavia, the most extreme fears of potential crisis became reality.

U.S. national interests must be articulated before foreign policy can be decided. However, these specific interests have yet to be established since the demise of the Soviet Union. By examining the evolution of the public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a better understanding of what those interests should focus upon in the future emerges. The definitions of American national interests in the former Yugoslavia have been the focus of

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guided U.S. foreign policy throughout the entire Cold War. For more details, see Samuel P. Huntington, The Common Defense, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961) 47-53.



major public debates for the past three years and will be discussed in this thesis.

Because this thesis focuses on the U.S. public debate over the war in the former Yugoslavia, the chapter on history is not elaborate or comprehensive. It serves only to provide a brief description of the geopolitical and nationalist aspects of Yugoslavia which have remained constant throughout the ages. The Balkans have played a significant role in shaping modern European history since the nineteenth century. The potential for a greater European conflict is therefore, not so far fetched when one reviews the history of political conflict and war in this region. Furthermore, this history is significant in understanding how events and personalities--which have propelled Yugoslavia into a three year war--have been misinterpreted and misjudged in the public debate.

Although U.S. foreign policy is created within the Executive Branch of government, the American public increasingly influences policy. Chapter III examines the key players in the American public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Based upon an analysis of: mainstream news articles, *The New York Times* editorials, and Congressional statements and hearings, the public debate over the crisis in the former Yugoslavia did not emerged until the war spread to Bosnia-Herzegovian.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this thesis focuses on the period after war broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 and on the reactions and actions within the Bush and Clinton administrations. However, Chapter

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<sup>3</sup>This analysis was based on a comprehensive review of all mainstream news articles compiled in The Readers Guide to Periodicals, Congressional Hearings, and The New York Times, between 1990 and 1994. See graphic presentation of the public debate on the former Yugoslavia in Appendix A.

four provides a brief description of the events in Croatia and Slovenia, which sets the stage for the Bosnian phase of the war, as discussed in Chapter V.

One of the major issues in the public debate over Bosnia-Herzegovina is the "ethnic cleansing" campaign launched upon the Bosnian Muslim population. When the world discovered the depth of violence occurring in the former Yugoslavia, American public debate increased dramatically. Chapter VI describes how this violent campaign was revealed to the American public and examines the way in which the government reacted and how public debate developed over the issue of U.S. intervention as a result of these findings.

Chapter VII begins and ends with an examination of the evolution of foreign policy in the Clinton administration and how public debate evolved between 1993 and 1994. It touches briefly on the major events which occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and examines more closely the way in which all the actors affected one another in the American public debate.

In a sense, the U.S. must start fresh in designing a new foreign policy doctrine for the post-Cold War world. In order to design a new foreign policy doctrine, U.S. national interests and its leadership roles in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations must also be redefined within the realm of the changing world.

In addition to identifying national interests, the threat to these interests must also be identified. The U.S. fought the Cold War in order to champion democracy and human rights. Will the U.S. remain the champion of democracy and human rights? Will Americans be lead by their emotions and moral obligations to police the world? The NSC 68 document served the

U.S. well throughout the Cold War. However, its usefulness ended when the bi-polar world dissolved. The questions that must be addressed are: 1) Have U.S. national interests in Eastern Europe have changed? and 2) Is the U.S. prepared or willing to fill the security vacuum left by the former Soviet Union?

Piecemeal attempts by the U.S. to participate in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, indicates that global interests have waned since the Cold War, but are still being debated. These interests have been the focus of public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the past three years and are discussed in this thesis. This examination may present a clearer picture of what post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy must focus on in the future.

Many new dangers have replaced the looming hegemonic control of the former Soviet Union. New battle cries of socialism and neo-facsism have emerged from the left-over leaders of the old communist regimes in many of the former Soviet satellites and republics. This danger was realized by 1991 when Slobodan Milosevic, president of Serbia, invaded Croatia and Slovenia and began the bloodiest war in Europe since World War II (WWII).

In 1990, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia held free elections for the first time in thirty-eight years. The following year, the newly elected democratic government chose to secede from a predominately communist--renamed socialist--regime of Slobodan Miliosevic. Prompted by their fear of President Milosevic's intentions to create a Greater Serbia within Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia chose independence. As recognized independent, democratic states they were attacked by a communist aggressor who threatened to alter their borders and expel or exterminate their people. The Western nations

fought the Cold War precisely to abolish this belligerent behavior. The American public debate hardly mentions Milosevic and his socialist desires for a Greater Serbia. However, this was arguably the driving force behind the war, not "ethnic tensions" or "ancient hatreds," which are discussed in Chapter II.

The destruction of Yugoslavia has been argued by many as a direct consequence of the ethnic tensions between Serbs, Muslims and Croats which go as far back as the fourteenth century. Many government officials--including President Bush--used this argument to justify non-intervention.<sup>4</sup>

Although this thesis does not focus on the origins of this complex war, it is important to address the important events in Balkan history. In order to introduce the nature of public debate over the current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, history must be analyzed for its significance in shaping American attitudes and reactions towards the events between 1991 and 1994. The misinterpretation of history and the selective exploitation of it in the current Balkan war is precisely what exacerbated the tragedy which unfolded in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The following chapter provides a brief and objective account of Balkan history as it relates to the current situation.

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<sup>4</sup>See President Bush's remarks at news conference, Colorado Springs, Colorado, August 6, 1992. For full transcript see U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (August 10, 1992) v.3, p.617.

## II. HISTORIC BACKGROUND

You take my life  
when you do take the means whereby I live.<sup>5</sup>

Dispute over territorial claims in the Balkans has been repeated throughout history. The "ancient hatreds" theory, used to explain the current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is discussed in this chapter. The Ottoman, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires fought for control over the land of the South Slavs from medieval times to the twentieth century. Simultaneously, the indigenous people, comprised of Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians, fought for autonomy within their land. The numerous uprisings by Serbs and Croats usually won the sympathies of either Russia (for the Orthodox ), Austria (for the Roman Catholics,) or the Turks (for the Muslims)--which brought the Balkans into the central focus of Great Power rivalries. During the nineteenth century, this became known as the "Eastern Question." The current conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina is also a matter of territorial rights and ethnic domination, this time between the Serbs and Bosnian Muslims--both claiming historic ties to the land.

The struggle over power and territory in the Balkans involves many actors. The historic continuities of ethnic rivalry and Great Power competition in this region can be easily drawn from the middle ages to the present. However, there are far too many actors, with changing roles and ideologies, to make the continuity entirely fluid.<sup>6</sup> The current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a clear example of historic discontinuity. Although the war has become fiercely divided into distinct ethnic groups, the actors within

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<sup>5</sup>William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Scene I.

<sup>6</sup>For an excellent study on ethnicity and religion in Bosnia, see Ivo Andric, The Bridge on the Drina (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945, translated in 1959).

these groups identify with several different periods of history and events. Some have rallied around the "Battle of Kosovo" in 1348, while others were obsessed with the events of WWII and the Civil War. And still, there are those who are only concerned with what has occurred in their lifetimes and identify with the peaceful coexistence of religions during the past forty years.

Public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina could not possibly take in all of the intricacies involved in Balkan history. However, the "ancient hatreds" theory was a major factor in the U.S. public debate when the need arose to justify U.S. non-intervention. Those in the public debate who have argued against intervention, frequently brought up the "ancient hatreds" or "ethno-nationalism" theory. The use of complex historic rivalries was used to dissuade the U.S. from becoming involved in a protracted conflict between historic enemies. Interventionists, on the other hand, tended to refute dismiss these theories and concentrated on the humanitarian aspect of the war--especially as the atrocities began to surmount.

The fact that there are three separate ethno-religious groups who have been living within a communist-controlled federation for the past forty-five years, complicates matters even further. To make matters even more confusing, each ethnic group is composed of several regional and local groups, speaking and reading different dialects of the Serbo-Croatian language, and living side by side with one another. It is because of this complicated web of mixed sociologic groupings, that makes it impossible to blame the origins of the current war on an ethnic dispute between two distinct factions. But, the notion that "ethno-nationalism" and "ancient

hatreds" was the direct cause of the current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was easily accepted by many as a post-Cold war phenomenon--suppressed for years by communism and suddenly unleashed.

It is for the reasons presented in the above discussion that public debate over the current war in Bosnia-Herzegovina must be analyzed within the context of Balkan history. Suppressed ancient hatreds were not the cause of the current war, however they were indeed, used to inspire the barbaric side of human beings to levels of inhumanity unimaginable to the average person. Both the Serbs and Bosnian Muslims are now entangled in deep-rooted hatreds which, only five years ago had little to do with everyday life in Yugoslavia. The carnage committed over the past two years, however, has added to the collective pain and histories of the South Slav peoples, which will take yet another generation to heal.

American public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina dragged history into the arguments without really understanding the political and sociological backgrounds of the Balkan people. The following discussion provides a brief background of the Yugoslavs or, literally translated, "South Slavs."

#### **A. THE "ANCIENT HATREDS" THEORY**

President Slobodan Milosevic, of Serbia frequently made references to the Battle of Kosovo, which took place over six hundred years ago, in order to inspire vengeance against the Turks (or Muslims) for centuries of Ottoman domination. General Ratko Mladic, son of a Cetnik soldier and leader of the Serbian Army, identifies himself with the Cetniks from WWII and the Civil War and rallies his troops around Cetnik war cries, colors, symbols, and

songs.<sup>7</sup> These Serbian leaders have exploited different historic events for their own political and personal gain. The exploitation was made easy, however, due to the powerful political forces of pain and tragedy throughout Balkan history--not to mention the forces of a communist dictator.

The "ancient hatreds" theory is much more complicated than most would assume. War in Europe and Asia was hardly uncommon throughout history. Most every country in Europe and Asia fought one another at some point in history. So, why does hatred in the Balkans run so much deeper than that of the French and the Germans? Furthermore, the Serbs, Croats and Muslims have been living under the name Yugoslavia for over eighty years. These questions were not proposed by those who used the "ancient hatreds" theory to explain the current war.

### **1. The South Slavs**

The Balkan peninsula was once the homeland of the Greek empire before the sixth century A.D. and included Hellenes, Macedonians, Thracians and Illyrians. During the sixth century, a huge migration from what is known today as the Ukraine and Russia brought several Slavic tribes escaping from the swampy lands and violent invasions of that region. The craggy mountain ranges, forests, rivers, and fertile valleys of the Balkan peninsula were their places of settlement. They did, however, encounter opposition from the dying Greek nations and Byzantine commanders of imperial frontier garrisons. But, they arrived by the thousands throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, despite the opposition. Once they were settled, the Slavs dispersed into numerous tribal elements throughout the Balkan

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<sup>7</sup>David Binder, "Pariah as Patriot: Ratko Mladic," The New York Times Magazine, (September 44, 1994) 26-29.



mountains and hills, sometimes never seeing another tribe for decades at a time.<sup>8</sup>

Because of the tribal nature of the Balkan Slavs and their dispersion into the mountains, there was no overarching leadership or Slavic unity for centuries after their arrival. The Byzantines and Romans spread Catholicism and Orthodoxy throughout the Balkans, which took firm and lasting root and provided religious leadership. However, the heretic practice of Bogomilism<sup>9</sup> - a form of dualism which rejected authority-- was presented in the tenth century by the King of Serbia and remained popular throughout the middle ages. The separate tribal and religious groups were led by chieftains and organized into larger combinations as the middle ages progressed. By the eleventh century, there were basically two large divisions--the Serbs and the Croats. This was followed by the formation of the countries of Serbia and Croatia, led by respective princes. Bosnia was situated between these two countries and inhabited by a mixture of Serbian and Croatian Slavs.<sup>10</sup>

In order to distinguish a border between Serbia and Croatia, the Roman and Byzantine statesmen collaborated and made the Drina river the boundary between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Being Orthodox was the equivalent of being Serbian, therefore, Catholics were considered Croats. However, this demarcation left many Catholics on the Serbian side of the border and many Orthodox on the Croat side. This was cause for much confusion and tension

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<sup>8</sup>Louis Adamic, My Native Land, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943) 206-207.

<sup>9</sup>Bogomilism (from the name of a Slav priest called 'Bogomil', the Slavonic form of the Greek name Theophilus) was similar to, and influenced by, the Massalian and Paulician heresies which flourished in Asia Minor. The Bogomils rejected all outward forms of ecclesiastical organisation and religious rituals as being expressions of the powers of evil. See Muriel Heppell and Frank B. Singleton, Yugoslavia, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961) 47-48, for more on Bogomilism.

<sup>10</sup>Adamic, 209.

which has lasted to the present day.<sup>11</sup> In Bosnia, the original Slavs claimed neither to be Croatian nor Serbian. However, as soon as their religions took root, they were labeled as Bosnian Serbs or Bosnian Croats.

The Serbs were under the influence and control of the Byzantine empire until the early thirteenth century. They formed independent states with native Kings. In 1219, they were granted an independent Archbishopric, which was later raised to a Patriarchate. The national church organization acted as the driving force and bond for Serbian ethnic consciousness after they lost their independence to the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. The Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire ruled over the Balkans for over five hundred years. Over twenty million inhabitants of numerous diverse nationalities of both the Islamic and Christian faith lived within this empire. The Turkish military was a powerful organization which allowed for the repressive control of a vast area that reached from the Habsburg lands to the Venetian possessions.

To this day, June twenty-eighth is honored in Serbia to commemorate the day the Serbian army was defeated by the invasion of the Turks in 1389 at the Battle of Kosovo. It is now called "Vivovdan" and Serbian National Day. The Ottoman Turks forcibly brought the Muslim faith into Bosnia when they invaded. All Slavs who refused to convert to Islam were repressed and forced into a barbaric form of Turkish feudalism. This was the origin of recently exploited propaganda used to create animosity by the ultra-nationalist Serbian

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 211-210.

<sup>12</sup>Robert F. Byrnes, ed. East-Central Europe Under the Communists: Yugoslavia, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957) 4.

aggressors towards the Muslims in the war in Bosnia today. In fact, the name "Turk" is often heard today in Serbia as a derogatory term for "Muslims".<sup>13</sup>

In his essay titled "The Clash of Civilizations," Samuel P. Huntington proposed that the existence of "fault lines between Western Christianity, Orthodox Christianity and Islam was made in the year 1500." It begins as far north as Finland-- separating it from Russia-- and cuts south dividing Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of Yugoslavia. He stated that this line coincided with the separation between the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires.<sup>14</sup> There are those who have used this argument in public debate to simplify the current Balkan war as the continuation of an ancient feud along an established religious fault line.<sup>15</sup> A closer analysis of history illustrates the depth and complexity of the South Slavs, which serves to discount this theory.

### 3. The Demise of the Ottoman Empire

Turkish rule lasted through the nineteenth century. The Ottoman empire--the "sick man of Europe"--gradually lost its powerful grip in the Balkans. Numerous peasant revolts occurred throughout the nineteenth century and climaxed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. An insurrection began in August 1875, against Turkish rule in the predominantly Christian provinces in the southern Balkans. The national self-consciousness of the Serbs living there was encouraged by Serbian and Russian propaganda. The Serbs introduced their desires for an expanded, Greater Serbia. The violence and demonstrations spread rapidly to other Turkish portions of the Balkans. Russia became involved in the war to help their brother Serbs, and more

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<sup>13</sup>Aleksa Djilas, "The Nation That Wasn't," The New Republic, (September 21, 1992): 26.

<sup>14</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," Foreign Affairs, 72 (Summer 1993): 30.

<sup>15</sup>See Congressional Records on October 4, 1993 for discussion of opponents to intervention and the use of historic analyses of ancient hatreds and civil war in the Balkans.

importantly, to obtain access to the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas. The Pan-Slavism movement in Russia encouraged the Serbian revolts and drew Russia into the battle.<sup>16</sup> This launched the Russo-Turkish war, which drew the attention of the great powers in Europe--all of whom had keen interests in the fate of the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan peninsula was the focal point of the balance of power system which lasted most of the nineteenth century in Europe.

In 1878, Russia managed to defeat the Turks and the peace of San Stefano was negotiated. This was followed by the Congress of Berlin in 1881, which managed to accomplish several things: 1) The Austro-Hungarian empire received control over Bosnia and Herzegovina; 2) Serbia's plans to acquire large territory for a Greater Serbia was foiled; 3) Sovereignty was granted to Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro; 4) Bulgaria became an autonomous principality; 5) Turkey lost half of its empire; and 6) Russia was left with very little.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. The Habsburg Empire**

The Habsburg rulers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire controlled Bosnia-Herzegovina until 1914. The Slavs in Bosnia-Herzegovina consisted of both Serbs and Croats, some of which happened to be of the Muslim religion. The subjugation of the Ottoman Turks was, by far, more oppressive than the Habsburgs', however, it was subjugation nonetheless.

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<sup>16</sup>Several scholarly works have argued that Russia was also fighting for a land access through the Balkans to obtain rights to the Straits and Dardanelles. For further details see, George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), and Gordon A. Craig, *Europe Since 1815*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974).

<sup>17</sup>Gordon A. Craig, *Europe Since 1815*, Alt. ed. (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1974) 187.

The Habsburgs controlled its territories by keeping a firm grip on nationalist tendencies. This prevented Bosnia from joining either Serbia or Croatia--despite the efforts of both sides to gain influence. They also promoted the Bosnian nationality among the three ethno-religious groups -- the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims --so that none could gain power or influence. Finally, a police state was set up in Bosnia in the late nineteenth century to prevent influences from either Croatia or Serbia. The Slavic people in Bosnia were, therefore, distinguished only by their religion.<sup>18</sup>

The Bosnians, weary of centuries of subjugation, revolted on several occasions. The two Balkan wars were fought between 1912 and 1914, but accomplished little in releasing the Austrian yoke. The so-called "Balkan powder keg" exploded, however, on the celebration of "Vidovdan" in 1914 when a Bosnian Serb youth named Princip shot the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, launching World War I (WWI). Princip belonged to a large youth and underground organization--the Young Bosnia society-- fighting for Bosnia's independence.<sup>19</sup>

### 5. The Kingdom of the Serbs

In December 1918, the Declaration of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was announced. The date of the promulgation of the constitution was referred to as, "Vidovdan" --the Serbian National Day-- which came exactly four years after the death of King Ferdinand.

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<sup>18</sup>Phyllis Autry, Yugoslavia, (New York: Walker and Company, 1965) 49--50.

<sup>19</sup>Vladimir Dedijer, Ivan Bozic, Sima Cirkovic, and Milorad Ekmecic, History of Yugoslavia, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974, originally published in Serbo-Croatian by Prosveta, Belgrade, 1972) 467-468.

The constituent assembly of 1920 was represented by fifty-eight Communists, fifty Croat Peasants, twenty-seven Slovene Populists, ten Social democrats and 264 Serb Centralists. The non-Serbs withdrew from the deliberations due to their irreconcilable differences with the pan-Serb majority. In essence, the *precani*<sup>20</sup> of the former Austro-Hungarian provinces and the depressed non-Slav minorities did not have a say in the government of the country. The predominance of Serbs in Yugoslav government was a theme echoed throughout the next seventy years.

## 6. The Yugoslav Idea

In 1929, King Alexander assumed responsibility for governing the three kingdoms making up the land of the South Slavs. One of the first official acts of King Alexander was to combine and change the name of his kingdom to Yugoslavia, which is the Serbo-Croatian translation of *South Slavs*. Despite this all-encompassing name, the new government was still dominated by Serbs.

There were a few Croats who cooperated with the government, but were looked on by their fellow countrymen as traitors. Many Croats fled to Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria to enlist the support of foreign powers in favor of Croat independence. The Croat Peasant Party even approached The League of Nations in Geneva for help. However, nothing substantial came of their grievances.<sup>21</sup> Serbian dominance in Yugoslav government and the royal

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<sup>20</sup>Precani is a Serbian word, literally meaning people from "the other side"--of the Danube and the Sava rivers. Used to refer to the Slavs living in the former Austro-Hungarian provinces. See Heppell, 150.

<sup>21</sup>Heppell and Singleton, 157-158.

dictatorship lasted until Alexander's assassination by an extremist from the Croatian Ustashe organization in 1934.<sup>22</sup>

Although the Yugoslav peoples emerged from WWI united under a Slavic ruler, a collective image of Yugoslavia was lacking.

## B. WORLD WAR II AND THE CIVIL WAR

*Countries, like individuals, usually cut an image of some kind. Out of thousands of elements certain general characteristics or specific styles of life become associated with one country or another in a way that commands instant recognition...The image of Yugoslavia is blurred, hazy or nebulous...*<sup>23</sup>

This description of Yugoslavia has not changed since its creation. One of the few elements that can be associated with the Yugoslavs is their Serbo-Croatian language.<sup>24</sup> But even this was altered through the ages with various dialects and indigenous vernaculars throughout the regions. Another commonality is the shared history of suffering and subjugation. A legacy of imperial wars, invasions, and colonial rule have left the Balkans with a landscape of Gothic spires, Islamic mosques and Byzantine domes.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the world's image of Yugoslavia is actually one of coexistence between several different cultures.

The three major cultures in Yugoslavia came to a clash during WWII. When Yugoslavia was invaded by Germany the people were split into various ethnic and ideological camps. The remnants of the Royal Army fled to the hills of Ravna and Gora in Serbia. They took on the name *Cetnik* for

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<sup>22</sup>Milton Viorst, "On Yugoslavia," The New Yorker, (March 18, 1991): 67.

<sup>23</sup>Dusko Doder, The Yugoslavs, (New York: Random House, 1978) 18.

<sup>24</sup>Although Slovenia has their own language, five of the six regions speak Serbo-Croatian.

<sup>25</sup>Doder, 18.

their group, which is a word borrowed from the nineteenth-century Serbian irregulars who fought against the Turks. The Cetniks were also a combination of the veteran's legion and Serbian Territorial Army, led by the Vojvoda Kosta Pecanac. They were predominantly of Serbian ethnicity.<sup>26</sup>

The communist-led Partisans led the strongest of the resistance movements and also used the mountainous terrain of Yugoslavia for their bastions from the Nazis. The partisans were trained in guerrilla warfare, which proved far superior to the tactics used by their Cetnik rivals. Leadership was also strong among the partisans. Josip Broz Tito was their dynamic leader who demonstrated a genuine devotion to the ideology of the socialist movement and to the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup>

The Partisans' agenda differed greatly from that of the Cetniks. Tito and his associates were veteran Communists trying to deflect Axis troops from the Soviet front and eventually create a Communist regime in Yugoslavia after the war. The differences in causes led to differences in tactics as well. The Cetniks' operations aggravated the Nazis which led to the merciless killing of helpless civilians. Realizing this, the Cetniks limited their operations to prepare for the day when a large uprising could be carried out in conjunction with an Allied invasion. They were also convinced that the Axis powers would lose the war. Therefore, their chief enemy became the Communist-led partisan movement.<sup>28</sup>

The Partisans fought a savage war with the Axis powers, despite the consequential heavy losses in lives and property. They exploited the fact that

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<sup>26</sup>Heppell, 172.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, 172-175.

<sup>28</sup>Byrnes, 15.



reprisals from the Nazis increased the hatred for the enemy among the people of Yugoslavia, driving more of them into the resistance. Popularity for the partisans grew as support for the Cetniks waned. The Partisans claimed to represent all Yugoslavs, while the Cetniks were primarily Serbs. The Partisans also promised a democratic federated state of brotherhood, unity, and equality of peoples.<sup>29</sup>

The *Ustashes* --meaning rebels<sup>30</sup>--were led by a Fascist named Ante Pavelic. When the Nazis invaded Croatia, they set up a puppet government with Pavelic as their pawn. Pavelic was the Ustashe leader who organized the assassination of King Alexander in 1934. The technique of "depopulation" was introduced by the Nazis and given to Pavelic to carry out in Yugoslavia. The idea was to first remove the spiritual head, cultural leaders, technical specialists and all other individuals with power or intellect to whom the country could turn for guidance. The plan, also referred to as "ethnic cleansing," was aimed primarily at Serbs, Gypsies, Jews and Muslims. However, the Serbs received the greatest number of casualties. Once this was complete, the plan was to liquidate the entire region to make room for Aryan populations. The Ustashes were essentially part of the Axis forces.<sup>31</sup>

During the war, Adolf Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany, gave Heinrich Himmler an order "to put a river of blood between the Serbian and Croatian peoples. This was a massive effort to forestall the fear that when the Germans invaded Russia, mass uprisings might occur all across the Balkans, where the people were prone to maintain Slavic bonds with each other and--

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid, 16.

<sup>30</sup>Translated from the Serbo-Croatian language.

<sup>31</sup>Adamic, 36.

more importantly-- with Russia. It was also a plan to kill off a large number of Serbs and instill fear and hatred between the two groups--preventing any future collaboration.<sup>32</sup>

Of the one and three-quarter million who died in Yugoslavia in WWII, over one million of them were victims of the civil war. The tragic irony in this is that the Ustashes were largely made up of society's outcasts --criminals and vagrants, German and Hungarian nationals, and ultra-nationalists equipped with Italian and German weapons.<sup>33</sup> This essentially provided justification and legitimacy to every bandit, sadist and mentally disturbed person to carry out his every violent desire. The fratricide of the South Slavs, which caused lasting hatreds between Croats, Serbs and Muslims, was not inspired from the masses, but imposed from above. This situation is starkly similar to the one in the former Yugoslavia today.

### C. TITO

The end of WWII brought Josip Broz Tito and the communist party to power in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was organized as a federation, however, in reality functioned as a centralized communist state. Bosnia-Herzegovina was one of the federal units within its own historical borders, and acted as a buffer between Croatia and Serbia. Much in the same way Stalin controlled the nationalities of the Soviet Union and kept the lid on ethnic tension, Tito also suppressed ethnic conflict within Yugoslavia. Since the ethnic divisions in the former Yugoslavia are made along religious lines, the atheistic communist regime was able to remove the ethnic factor at least from the surface. The communist regime did, however allow the Muslim population

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

to express themselves as a nation in the 1961 census which showed a large majority in Bosnia-Herzegovina. All three religions--Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox-- however, peacefully coexisted in Bosnia-Herzegovina which made the situation idyllic, in light of the ethnic bloodshed during WWII and the Civil War. Tensions were boiling, however, in the realm of economics and the pressure for democracy. This tension was kept under a lid until Tito's death.<sup>34</sup>

Credit must be given to Tito for constructing and managing Yugoslavia after WWII in such a way as to prevent ethnic slaughter from occurring again--at least during his lifetime. During Tito's term and until his death in 1980, he and his party, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) successfully held the federation together. Throughout the Tito years, Yugoslavia flourished economically with its material wealth, foreign investors and productivity. However, after Tito's death, the country gradually deteriorated and the party disintegrated in 1990.

#### **D. POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA**

Arguably, the first signs that the fiber of the Yugoslav idea was unraveling began when Josip Broz Tito died in 1980. One of the most obvious signs occurred in April 1981 when the Serbian government imposed martial law upon the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo. After several days of demonstrations by local Albanians, the military and police used brutal force to quell the uprising. The following year was marked by thousands of arrests and purges. Ethnic Albanian government officials and party members were killed or deported--evoking memories of Stalinism. The

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<sup>34</sup>Zoran Batusic, "E Pluribus Unum?" East European Reporter, (March-April 1992) 22-24.

purges quickly reached all non-Serb party members throughout the former republics of Yugoslavia during the 1980's.<sup>35</sup>

After Kosovo lost its autonomous status, the domination of Serbians in the central government of Yugoslavia and in the Yugoslav army threatened the other five republics and the autonomous province of Vojvodina. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia felt threatened by Serb domination and soon grasped the idea of democracy-- which had been spreading throughout Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1990.

*Hatred had to be created, and the key instrument in this was television.* <sup>36</sup>

The theme of "ancient hatreds" was first introduced by Slobodan Milosevic in his campaign for President of Serbia. Milosevic's monopoly of control over the television and radio stations and major newspapers throughout the former Yugoslavia played a crucial part in inciting massive support during the beginning of the war and sustaining that support for the past three years. According to Daniel Plesch of the British American Security Information Council, "television propaganda was a major force in making, and keeping, the people of Serbia and Croatia war-minded and obsessed with vengeance."<sup>37</sup> Mr. Plesch testified before the House Armed Services Committee Hearings on Bosnia, that the war in the former Yugoslavia was, while indeed complex and tragic, not caused by ancient hatreds which had been waiting to be unleashed throughout the Tito years. He stated that over

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<sup>35</sup>Branka Magas, The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-up 1980-1992, (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 9.

<sup>36</sup>Stojan Cerovic, Commentator for the Belgrade weekly, Vreme, quoted by Congressman Dornan, House Armed Services Committee Hearings, March 1994.

<sup>37</sup>See Congressional Records for House Armed Services Hearings on Bosnia, for testimony by Daniel Plesch, March 1994.

ninety-six percent of households in the war-torn regions of the former Yugoslavia had televisions. The impact Milosevic had on influencing and luring the Serbian population throughout Yugoslavia was tremendous, as evidenced in the vicious fighting during the past three years.

For those who are fluent in Balkan history, it is difficult to attribute the origins of the war to "ancient hatreds." The levels of analysis must go further than that of "simple blood feuds." The questions must be addressed as to who were feuding and from which period in history is the association drawn? Was the feud between Serbs and Croats, Turks and Slavs, Muslims and Orthodox, or Ustashes and Cetniks? Precisely which group and what period of time are the present-day Serbs identifying?

This thesis does not attempt to answer these questions, however, they are posed to illustrate the initial focus of public debate. Although "ancient hatreds" have played a major role in the Balkans for the past 600 years, the current conflict was clearly affected by more recent political tensions after Tito's death and the demise of communism.

Furthermore, the leadership role played by President Milosevic forced the catalysm of events which blew up the Balkan "powder keg" and let loose the forces of "ancient history." This role, however, was not included as part of the major public debate over U.S. foreign policy. Although Milosevic was demonized in the press and compared with the likes of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, he was not used by actors in the public debate to justify either intervention or non-intervention.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

Reactions and actions by the U.S. government and the public debate over the Yugoslav crisis can not be examined without a fundamental knowledge of Balkan history--as complex as it is. The realities of the post-Cold War period have allowed the world to think in terms of pre-Cold War historical events. The Balkans have routinely taken center stage throughout history as the focal point of great power rivalries since the middle ages. The significance of this history can not be ignored, nor can it be completely blamed for the current crisis.

The historic complexity of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was most frequently used by isolationists to justify non-intervention during the Croatian phase of the war, and first few months of the Bosnian phase. (See graph in Appendix A. for graphic illustration) However, as the humanitarian aspect of the war became unbearable to the American public, the "ancient hatreds" theory was set aside.

Balkan history is indeed a complex web of war, nationalism and centuries of subjugation. However, there were also long and frequent periods of tranquil coexistence between all the peoples which comprised the South Slavs. The historic events, briefly summarized in this chapter, should not be discounted by those who are quick to label the current situation as a "quagmire" born of unleashed "ancient hatreds."

The following chapter will discuss the actors--both interventionists and isolationists-- involved in shaping U.S. policy towards the war in the former Yugoslavia.

### III. THE ACTORS AND THEIR ROLES

*the President's role is to establish criteria for national interests, galvanize interest, explain events, interpret motives and ask for support.*<sup>38</sup>

The approach of U.S. policy towards the crisis in the former Yugoslavia was influenced by a small group of actors in 1990 and grew into a major public debate by the end of 1993. The President has traditionally been the most powerful voice in foreign affairs, however, domestic opinion has played a significant role in influencing foreign policy throughout history and even more so in recent decades. The actors involved in shaping the public debate over the war in the former Yugoslavia included: the President; the President's Inner Circle; Congress; the media; the American public and ; the world community. This chapter will analyze these actors and their roles in order to understand how the public debate evolved and how the various actors may have influenced one another in shaping the final outcome for foreign policy in the former Yugoslavia.

Both Presidents Bush and Clinton had the opportunity to flex their powers as president to push for unilateral or multi-lateral involvement in the former Yugoslavia, but chose to remain cautious while yielding the role of leader to the European Community. The hesitation by both presidents, allowed time for public debate to emerge with a strong and influential voice. Because of this, unilateral diplomatic or military intervention in the former Yugoslavia could only have been accomplished by presidential initiative.

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<sup>38</sup>For more discussion on the role of the President in the post-Cold War world, see Catherine McArdle Kelleher's "Security in the New Order: Presidents, Polls, and the Use of Force" in Daniel Yankelovich and I.M. Destler, eds. Beyond the Beltway: Engaging the Public in U.S. Foreign Policy, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994) 225-252.

History clearly shows how every major conflict in the twentieth century--from WW I to the Gulf War--in which the U.S. eventually became involved was supported by a reluctant American public after strong presidential initiative worked to garner support. However, initiatives for multi-lateral intervention in the former Yugoslavia--either diplomatic or military--have been supported by the U.S. under NATO or UN auspices only for the delivery of humanitarian aid and only after a peace agreement is signed by all warring parties.

As the crisis in the Balkans progressed from 1990 into 1992, U.S. public debate over the situation grew stronger and pressure on the U.S. government to intervene mounted first on President Bush, and then President Clinton.

#### **A. THE PRESIDENT**

The framers of the U.S. Constitution gave the President a significant amount of power in foreign affairs and defense matters. They recognized the potential need of the President to take quick and decisive action on matters whose window of opportunity for action might not be wide enough for the long and cumbersome procedures of debate and argument characteristic of a legislative body.<sup>39</sup>

President George Washington's warning of "entangling alliances" in his farewell address has been evoked by isolationists each time the U.S. considered entering an overseas conflict. The current Balkan crisis is no exception. Non-interventionists have used this warning as well as the disastrous experience in the Vietnam conflict to keep the U.S. out of Bosnia.

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<sup>39</sup>Roger Hilsman, Laura Gaughran, Patricia A. Weitsman The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs: Conceptual Models and Bureaucratic Politics 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993) 137.



At a time when the world was allowed to breath a sigh of relief after four decades of living behind the fear of thermo-nuclear war, the American public was not willing to jump into a conflict overseas which did not directly threaten peace at home. U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf War was too recent for President Bush to make another attempt to garner support for U.S. intervention in another overseas crisis. However, there was also no attempt to use Presidential initiative to intervene as he did before the Gulf War.

There are many examples in history where the President used his power in foreign affairs during crises overseas before consulting with Congress or the American public. President Truman ordered troops into the Korean Conflict. President Eisenhower sent troops into Lebanon. President Johnson ordered the bombing of North Vietnam. President Nixon ordered the mining of Haiphong Harbor and the invasion of Cambodia. President Ford took policy positions on detente with the Soviet Union and the SALT talks. President Carter froze eight billion dollars in Iranian assets, imposed trade sanctions and pressured allies to join in, and dispatched a fleet to the Persian Gulf. President Reagan ordered the invasion of Grenada and Bush ordered the invasion of Panama.<sup>40</sup>

Due to the above examples and especially the experiences of Watergate and Vietnam, Congress established the War Powers Act of 1973 in order to curb the powers of the President. However, the above examples of intervention by Reagan and Bush clearly illustrates the lack of enforcement or regard given to the Act. The weight of Presidential authority and power in foreign affairs still carries much weight. Congress and the American public

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid, 136.

have, however, become more active in voicing their opinions on foreign policy initiatives since the collective experiences of Watergate and Vietnam.

In all fairness, the role of the President is indeed a difficult one in which the responsibility to juggle numerous issues--both foreign and domestic--are vast. During the first two years of the Yugoslav crisis, President Bush had much on his agenda, which included numerous left-over issues to contend with, including: 1) The Persian Gulf War and its aftermath; 2) The dissolution of the Soviet Union; 3) The upcoming Presidential election campaign; 4) The declining U.S. economy; and 5) Somalia. However, it is also the job of the President to be able to handle a variety of issues and crises by careful delegation and reliance on a loyal and knowledgeable "inner circle" of advisors and their staffs.

#### **B. THE PRESIDENT'S "INNER CIRCLE"**

For the purpose of this thesis, the "inner circle" of advisors to the President includes the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and the people who work for them--this includes the State Department, the CIA, and the National Security Council.

The role of the Secretary of State is most accurately illustrated by Graham Allison as a combination of roles all expected to be acted out simultaneously. These roles include: 1) Senior personal advisor to the President on the political and military issues; 2) The colleague of the President's other senior advisors on problems of foreign policy; 3) The ranking U.S. diplomat on negotiations with foreign powers; 4) The primary representative of the administration's foreign affairs and a defender of the actions of the administration and; 6) The administration's voice to the

outside world.<sup>41</sup> In order to fulfill the requirements of these roles, the President Bush relied on an "inner circle" of advisors in addition to Secretary of State James Baker and later Lawrence Eagleburger. He frequently turned to his "inner circle" which consisted of Secretary Baker, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, White House chief of staff John Sununu and the Secretary of Defense.

The National Security Advisor normally works closely with the Secretary of State and the President in dealing with foreign affairs policy questions. In the Bush administration, the President relied upon the expertise and advice of James Baker and Brent Scowcroft throughout his term with regard to the Yugoslav crisis.

### C. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Congress has historically allowed much leverage for the President to act unilaterally in foreign affairs policy issues. However, as noted above, Congress began to take a new interest in becoming more knowledgeable and hence more influential in foreign policy matters since the Vietnam and Watergate era.<sup>42</sup> Debate and argument over emotional issues such as human rights and humanitarian affairs in war torn areas of the world have filled the Congressional records over the years. The war in the former Yugoslavia has been debated in Congress for the past three years on an almost continuing basis.

During the first two years of Yugoslavia's demise, there were merely a handful of Senators and Congressmen who were interested in the Balkan

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<sup>41</sup>Graham Allison, The Essence of Decision.

<sup>42</sup>See Ripley and Lindsay, Congress Resurgent for discussion of Congress' evolving interests in foreign affairs and defense issues and its attempt to wield greater influence over government policy.

crisis--they included: Senators Dole, Deconcini, Lugar, Lieberman, Biden and Congressman McCloskey. It was not until late 1992, when the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina became headline news, that the Congressional debate over what to do about the war was inflamed by the media. The voices in Congress and the Senate multiplied by the beginning of 1993, which also placed more pressure on the newly elected Clinton administration to define its policy. This thesis will present empirical data which serves to illustrate the connection between the media's reporting of the war in Yugoslavia, Congressional activity and policy outcomes.

#### D. THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

*it is in the nature of democracies to have, for the most part, the most confused or erroneous ideas on external affairs, and to decide questions of foreign policy on purely domestic considerations.*<sup>43</sup>

Alexis Tocqueville spoke the above words over fifteen years ago, yet they still ring true today. The leaders of American government can not escape the requirement to listen to domestic opinion when dealing with foreign affairs. This is due in large part, to the aggressive growth of political lobbies and widespread public access to the media, as well as a general increase in public awareness in foreign affairs over the past few decades.

Americans rely on television images more than ever to frame their international opinions about world events. Images of the war in Vietnam brought the stark realities of the bloody business of war into the homes of nearly every American during the 1970's. Mainstream magazines provided images of chemical warfare used by Sadaam Hussein on the Kurdish

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<sup>43</sup>Quote by Alexis Tocqueville in George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, Expanded Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984) 176.

population in Iraq, which served to tug at the emotions of Americans. The advent of satellite communications paved the way for the "CNN factor", which played a major role during the Gulf War, which gave Americans real-time experiences of the war in the Middle East. The use of "soundbites" to capture the images of massive suffering in distant lands was the catalyst which sent American troops into Somalia in 1992. For Yugoslavia, CNN did not arrive on the scene until the gruesome images of concentration camps and marketplace bombings were available. Unfortunately, sound bites and CNN images can only capture one aspect of war and suffering and may serve only to oversimplify extremely complicated situations. However, it is more unfortunate that it sometimes requires the use of media images and sensational news stories, which play on the emotions of the American public before the government will act on foreign policy issues. This was clearly evident in the televised hunger in Somalia as compared to the untelevised situation in the Sudan.<sup>44</sup>

According to Gallup opinion polls taken between 1992 and 1993, the American public was more likely to favor intervention into Bosnia-Herzegovina for humanitarian reasons rather than to intervene in a civil war or to promote nation-building.<sup>45</sup> There were certain key words used in the Gallup polls which indicated the tendency for Americans to vote emotionally. For instance, in 1993, after news of concentration camps and "ethnic-cleansing" became widespread among American public, and the words "moral", "humanitarian" or "ethnic cleansing" were used, Americans

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<sup>44</sup>Catherine McArdle Kelleher in Daniel Yankelovich and I.M. Destler, eds. Beyond the Beltway: Engaging the Public in U.S. Foreign Policy, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994) 234.

<sup>45</sup>See Gallup Opinion Poll 28-29 January 1993.

were more likely to consider intervention. When asked what they considered good reasons for the U.S. to consider military intervention in Bosnia, sixty-three percent of Americans mentioned a moral obligation to stop "ethnic cleansing"; fifty-seven percent cited stopping the spread of ethnic conflict in Europe; and only forty-nine percent claimed that U.S. "national security interests" were at stake.<sup>46</sup> In early to mid-1992, the majority of Americans voted against the U.S. taking the lead in UN-backed air strikes and ground troops in Bosnia, but the words "humanitarian" and "ethnic-cleansing" were not mentioned and not yet part of the language used by the media in describing the Yugoslav conflict.<sup>47</sup>

#### **E. THE WORLD COMMUNITY**

The current war in the Balkans had the greatest impact on Europe. The EC, in particular, feared the overwhelming flow of refugees and the potential for the war to spill over into neighboring European countries. Turkey, Greece, Hungary and Romania were especially concerned with these issues.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, Western Europe enjoyed the security umbrella provided by the U.S. and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) while Eastern Europe had the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. At the end of the Cold War, NATO and U.S. downsizing and the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization created a security vacuum in Eastern Europe which caused alarm in Western Europe as well. The lack of a stable and credible collective security system in the Balkans allowed the current

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<sup>46</sup>See CNN/USA Today poll Bosnia, May 6, 1993.

<sup>47</sup>See Gallup Opinion Polls in July 1992, January 24-26 1993, February 12-14 1993, and May 6 1993.

<sup>48</sup>Michael Dewar, "Intervention in Bosnia--the Case Against," The World Today, (February 1993).

situation to develop unabated from crisis to tragedy within a year after the Cold War ended. Hesitation in countering crisis where a security vacuum existed proved to be the death of the state known as Yugoslavia.

The United Nations (UN) entered the public debate regarding the former Yugoslavia almost from the first signs of instability and continues to play a central role in an attempt to negotiate a settlement and end to the war.

Created toward the end and as a result of WWII, the preamble of the UN Charter states its purpose is, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind..."<sup>49</sup> In view of the post-Cold War era, in which the U.S., as the only remaining superpower can not provide security and diplomatic services to the entire world, the UN, as stated in its Charter, is the most logical and legitimate organization to do so. However, without an enforcement arm to ensure the peaceful settlements of disputes and to keep the new emerging threats at bay, the UN and its numerous resolutions may be deemed useless.

The UN peacekeeping forces in Croatia, under the title UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR,) were provided only for the purposes of ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid. In 1993, U.S. troops were sent to Macedonia, under the auspices of UNPROFOR. The mandate in Macedonia was one more suited to its capability, which was to provide preventive diplomacy and provide a buffer from Serbia. When the war broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina, UNPROFOR was sent to provide for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid and to ensure the creation of "safe areas."

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<sup>49</sup>For complete text of the UN Charter, see Bennet, A. LeRoy, International Organizations: Principles and Issues, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 435-436.

Attempts have also been made by the UN to mediate the crisis through diplomatic negotiation. UN mediators, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen proposed the well-known "Vance-Owen Plan" toward the end of 1992. This plan was rejected by both the Serbs and Muslims and denounced by President Clinton. Later attempts were made to revise the plan to suit the requests of President Clinton and the warring parties. These efforts have only produced marginal results and have not put an end to the war or suffering.

The actors involved in the public debate emerged at different times during the initial phase of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. The first phase will be referred to as the Croatian phase and the second as the Bosnian phase. The following chapter examines the evolution of public debate during the Croatian phase of the war.



#### IV. PRELUDE TO CRISIS--THE WARNING SIGNS 1989-1991

In order to understand the way in which public debate over U.S. foreign policy was shaped in regard to the former Yugoslavia, it is necessary to examine the events which drove the crisis into war. One of the major issues discussed in this chapter is the impact of the end of the Cold War on the republics in the former Yugoslavia. The first free elections in thirty-eight years brought a democratic government into power in all of the republics of the former Yugoslavia except Serbia and Montenegro. The forces of democracy posed a direct and imminent threat to those communist leaders left over from the Tito era. Another issue which exacerbated the struggle for power included regional discrimination between ethnic groups. Although not widespread, the in-fighting between ethnic groups was used by the Slobodan Milosevic, Serbian President, to exploit historic ethnic rivalries. This issue is discussed as the "Milosevic factor." The third issue discussed in this chapter, is the impact of instability in the autonomous province of Kosovo on launching the movement for secession by Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Two of the actors involved in shaping initial U.S. public debate are discussed for their attempts to warn the American government and the world about the political tensions brewing in the former Yugoslavia. The impact of these warnings among the American media, public, President and his inner circle, is examined to understand how U.S. foreign policy was shaped in the beginning of the crisis.

The end of the Cold War reduced but did not eliminate the requirement to intervene in the internal politics of other nations. This

requirement was demonstrated in Kuwait, Somalia, Cambodia, Haiti, Rwanda, Cuba, Macedonia , Russia and of course, the former Yugoslavia--to name a few. However, in each of these post-cold war cases, intervention was executed in the form of crisis management rather than crisis prevention. And in all of these cases, crisis was certainly predicted well ahead of time. These crises are but signals for what may be in store for the world in the near future.

The origins of current crisis in the former Yugoslavia were not the result of unleashed nationalism and ethnic hatreds--suppressed during the Cold War--as some would surmise.<sup>50</sup> Tito's death left a political vacuum in Yugoslavia which gave his communist-trained minions a chance to fight for power. The political turmoil which followed was the result of this power struggle between communist elites. However, when the Cold War ended so abruptly toward the end of the decade, the struggle over power evolved into a fight between democratic factions and the communist-turned-socialist factions--led by Slobodan Milosevic.

#### A. THE "MILOSEVIC FACTOR" AND ETHNO-NATIONALISM

In 1986, the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences published *The Memorandum*, which broadly outlined the reluctance and validity of the goal of a Greater Serbia. One of the key elements of this manifesto proclaimed that the national question of the Serbian people was dashed by the communists at the end of WWII since "it did not get its own state like other peoples." It also focused on the unfairness of the federation, which it accused as being discriminatory towards Serbs. This accusation pointed blame towards the

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<sup>50</sup>For example, see Samuel P. Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (Summer 1993).

Slovenes and Croats, who in fact, became the most economically prosperous of the republics.<sup>51</sup>

Ethno-nationalism and ultra-nationalism were merely the means used and exploited for political ends by power seekers in Serbia. The first signs of this exploitation came in the autonomous province of Kosovo, which is situated within the republic of Serbia. The regime in Croatia, under the leadership of Franjo Tudgman, also had a reputation for discriminatory treatment of minorities--which happened to be Serbs in that republic. However, Milosevic took his power one step further and mounted a campaign of discrimination and oppression against the majority Albanian population in Kosovo, which led to the events which sparked the current war.

The "ancient hatreds" theory was, in fact propelled by Milosevic and the JNA in order to garner support for his plans for a Greater Serbia. His control of the media allowed this exploitation of historic conflict to happen with great ease and swiftness. He initially approached his nationalist campaign by painting Serbs as victims of everyone from the Albanians in Kosovo to the Roman Catholics in the Vatican.

## **B. SIGNS OF INSTABILITY**

The province of Kosovo is situated in the southern portion of the republic of Serbia and borders Albania. Serbs claim it to be the center of their medieval kingdom and cradle of Serbian civilization. Today, over ninety percent of the population is ethnically Albanian. Kosovo was granted autonomy within Serbia in 1946 along with the province of Vojvodina.

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<sup>51</sup> For further discussion of *The Memorandum*, see Norman Cigar, "The Serbo-Croatian War, 1991: Political and Military Dimensions," The Journal of Strategic Studies, (September 1993).

Until the late 1960's these autonomous provinces were not represented in federal bodies and had governing statutes rather than constitutions. Serbia could also modify their borders at will. However, with the support of Croatian nationalist liberals, by the late 1970's Kosovo and Vojvodina shared the same rights and privileges as the six republics with the following exceptions: 1) the possession of a provincial flag; 2) provincial citizenship; and 3) legal claim to the right of secession (which was guaranteed to the six republics.) Other than these symbolic vestiges, Kosovo and Vojvodina were, for all practical purposes, equal to the republics.<sup>52</sup>

Soon after Tito's death in 1980, Kosovo's peaceful coexistence with Serbia was terminated. In April 1981, Kosovo was placed under martial law after several days of mass demonstrations and riots by the local Albanian population. The crackdown in Kosovo resulted in thousands of arrests throughout the remainder of the decade and the complete loss of autonomy to Serbia.

In 1989, Serbia amended its constitution to assert greater control over the administrative and government affairs of its two provinces. This led to further unrest and violence in Kosovo which culminated in the summer of 1990 with Kosovo's complete loss of its autonomy to Serbia.<sup>53</sup>

The instability in Kosovo was the first significant sign of Yugoslavia's imminent crisis after the Cold War. The problems in Kosovo served as clear warnings to Croatia and Slovenia that democracy was not being fully embraced by Serbia and that more trouble was afoot. Croatia and Slovenia

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<sup>52</sup>Sabrina P. Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991, 2nd ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 76.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid, 78.

were vocal about their protest against Serbia's treatment of the Albanians in Kosovo. However, Serbia's government, led by Slobodan Milosevic met Slovenia's criticism of the Kosovo policy with open hostility by a unilateral declaration of an economic boycott against Slovenia. Croatia and Macedonia's protests prompted Serbia to push and support Serbian separatist groups within those republics.<sup>54</sup>

The republics of Slovenia and Croatia responded immediately to these events by taking advantage of the collapse of communism and secessionist movements in the Baltics and Eastern Europe and planning for their first democratic elections and eventual independence. The general fear was that what they saw happening in Kosovo would surely follow in the other republics.

### **C. FIRST FREE ELECTIONS SINCE WWII**

By 1990 the signs of Yugoslavia's imminent break-up became clear with the first round of fully democratic elections within the former Yugoslavia in over forty years. Croatia and Slovenia made no attempts to shroud their desire to become independent, democratic republics. The majority parties rather openly discussed their wishes during the election campaign for a looser confederation and decentralized government within Yugoslavia. Croatia and Slovenia did not, however, discuss full secession until 1991. However, when Slovenia and Croatia realized that Serbia would not only block these wishes but also move for greater centralized control with a dominant Serbian--communist-- leadership, Croatia and Slovenia hastened their plans for full secession.

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<sup>54</sup>Jim Seroka and Vukasin Pavlovic, eds. The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation. (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1992) 80.

When the first free elections in Yugoslavia were held in April and May of 1990, Slovenia and Croatia voted for administrative independence and democracy. This was not a vote for complete secession, but clearly demonstrated their desire to distance themselves from the central government and the communist-led republic of Serbia. The two republics favored a loose confederation, however separate and distinct from the ruling communist central government. Prior to the elections, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic publicly warned the other republics that any attempts toward independence would prompt aggressive action from Serb nationalists. By July, Slovenia and Croatia were ready to present a new constitution declaring its complete secession from Yugoslavia. On August 18, 1990, hundreds of armed Serbs sealed off towns and blocked roads in Croatia in order to rally for a referendum on local autonomy of the ethnic Serb population in Croatia.<sup>55</sup>

The first free elections in postwar Yugoslavia proved to be the turning point for the Communist Party and the Yugoslavia created by Tito and the prelude to war. By the end of November 1990 Yugoslavia was bursting with over 217 registered parties and more than that number of unregistered parties. Yugoslavia made the transformation from forty-five years of political monopoly to political pluralism was made almost over nite. Although the party explosion still continues, it can be broken down into three basic ideologies: a relatively heterogenous socialist left; a conglomerate of traditional conservative parties; and a group of liberal democratic parties and groups. There is also an absence of extreme left and extreme right blocs.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>The New York Times, (20 AUG 1990.)

<sup>56</sup>Ibid,179.

Both Slovenia and Croatia voted out the Communist Party the Democratic United Opposition of Slovenia (DEMOS) and Croatian Democratic Union won the most Assembly seats in each respective republic. Milan Kucan was elected President of Slovenia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia. Both republics achieved their long awaited goals of greater autonomy and more political liberalization. However, three things stood in their way--Belgrade, Slobodan Milosevic and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA).

In addition to the Serbian domination of the JNA, one of the most significant danger signals sent to Slovenia and Croatia was Serbia's domination and ultimate overthrow of the autonomous province of Kosovo. Slovenia and Croatia perceived the human rights violations and increased violence in Kosovo between 1989 and 1990 as a foreshadow of things to come in the rest of the republics.

#### **D. THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM AND SEARCH FOR DEMOCRACY**

The historic events of 1989 began with the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and continued with the emergence of many struggling and hopeful new democracies. Throughout the following year the post-communist countries had to contend with the prospects of their new found freedoms and scrambled for a sense of organization. The original signs of hope and vision disappeared quickly as the new democracies faced economic and administrative chaos.

The break up of Yugoslavia was preceded by several signs of instability and turmoil. Croatia and Slovenia made no attempts to shroud their desire to become independent, democratic republics after seeing the disaster in Kosovo unfold. They rather openly discussed their preferences for a looser

confederation and decentralized government within Yugoslavia as opposed to full secession. Serbia met Slovenia's

Democratic-style government and administration was entirely new to the leaders of the former Yugoslav republics, who needed time to organize and learn about the processes of democracy. The time required for this transition, however, was not allowed to even begin before war engulfed the entire region.

#### **E. THE HELSKINKI COMMISSION ISSUES WARNINGS**

The international community did not immediately respond to the Kosovo crisis in 1989 and was not prepared for the violent break-up of Yugoslavia two years later. However, the Commission of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which established the Helsinki Commission to monitor human rights abuses and democratic development in East and Central Europe after the fall of communism in the Soviet Union monitored the events in the former Yugoslavia from 1990 to the present.<sup>57</sup> Senator Dennis Deconcini, Chairman of the committee, led the Helsinki Commission in a visit to Yugoslavia in April 1990. Their purpose was to 1) Observe the first free, multi-party elections in post-war Yugoslavia; 2) Discuss and investigate human rights issues; and 3) Examine the situation in Kosovo by interviewing Serbian and Albanian groups. In its official report and in news releases written upon conclusion of the visit, the commission indicated that

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<sup>57</sup>The U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), was established in 1976 to monitor and encourage progress in implementing the provisions of the CSCE Final Act or Helsinki Accords. The purpose of the Final Act was to address every aspect of relations between states, including: military-security; economic, scientific and environmental cooperation; cultural and educational exchanges; and human rights and other humanitarian concerns. The goal of the commission is to lower the barriers which have artificially divided Europe into East and West for more than four decades. The commission is made up of 9 Senators, 9 Representatives and an official each from the Department of State, Commerce and Defense.



Kosovo's ethnic crisis had affected the entire country. The human rights abuses were confirmed by the commission through first-hand knowledge of political prisoners sentenced for their associations or even sympathies for political opposition.<sup>58</sup>

The commission also reported that the "rise in Serbian nationalism which Milosevic has merged with a defense of the Communist system, has aroused fears that Serbian assertion of control of its two provinces will eventually turn into Serbian attempts to dominate the whole of Yugoslavia."<sup>59</sup> This warning was not fully realized by the international community until it was too late and Serbia had moved in on Croatia and Slovenia. The CSCE produced volumes of material which took into account the political, cultural, religious and ethnic history of the Balkans in order to offer sound advice and warning with regard to the current crisis. Without the capability to enforce their proposals, however, the CSCE's warnings proved futile.

#### **F. INITIAL U.S. POLICY TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA**

The Bush administration made clear announcements during June and July 1991 that the U.S. would not support secession movements in Yugoslavia. One of the major factors affecting President Bush's decision to support Yugoslav unity was apprehension over the imminent demise of the Soviet Union and the independent movements in the Baltics and East-Central Europe. After the Berlin Wall came down and former Communist

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<sup>58</sup>Report of the Congressional Delegation Visit to Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, April 7-13, 1990.

<sup>59</sup>Elections in Central and Eastern Europe: A Compendium of Reports on the Elections Held from March through June 1990, Compiled by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington D.C. July 1990.

satellites embraced democracy and broke away from their Soviet hegemon, Yugoslavia's republics also felt the winds of democracy. The U.S., however, was concerned over the future of the Soviet Union and apprehensive over the possibility of its break-up. This theme is an historical repeat of WWI when Wilson clearly preferred to deal with the larger Russian Empire as opposed to several smaller, less stable states. The break-up of Yugoslavia was not endorsed by the U.S. for fear of sending signals to the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, the break-up was also not actively blocked by the U.S. or E.C.

### **1. Baker's Green Light to the Serbs**

In June 1991, Croatia and Slovenia were preparing for elections and a move toward independence. Two weeks before their announcement, U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker made a trip to Yugoslavia to plead with Croatian and Slovenian leaders to hold Yugoslavia together. He stated that the U.S. would not recognize the new republics and that "instability and breakup of Yugoslavia could have some very tragic consequences, not only here, but more broadly in Europe."<sup>60</sup> Less than a week after Baker's notorious visit, Slovenia and Croatia became independent nations. Three days later they were under attack by the Yugoslav Army. The federal government in Yugoslavia responded to the break-away republics by calling their actions "illegal" and ordered national army and police units to seize control posts along Slovenia's borders.<sup>61</sup> Although both declarations of independence used the words "disassociation" from Yugoslavia, both Kucan

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<sup>60</sup> Alan Riding, "Europeans Warn on Yugoslav Split," The New York Times (25 June 1991).

<sup>61</sup> Chuck Sudetic, "Two Yugoslav States Vote Independence to Press Demands," The New York Times, (26 June 1991).

and Tudjman continued to stress their eagerness to discuss the creation of a new more loosely confederated Yugoslav union.<sup>62</sup> However, the willingness of Slovenia and Croatia to negotiate was not followed by any mediation efforts from the West. The Serbians would only accept a loose confederation if all of Yugoslavia's Serbs were brought into a single state. Croatia and Bosnia had a large Serbian minority and therefore, opposed this idea. This is when confusion over labeling the situation in the former Yugoslavia began. Depending on how one viewed the combatants and victims, it was labeled as: a crisis; a war; a civil war; an invasion of state borders; an insurrection or; the beginning of World War III. Regardless of how it started or how it was initially labeled, it can now be defined as: genocide committed upon an unarmed civilian population in the bloodiest conflict in Europe since WWII. Many have later argued that Baker's comments were construed by the Serbs--in particular Milosevic--as the "green light" which allowed them to attack Slovenia and Croatia and commence the violence in the former Yugoslavia which has lasted to the present.

#### G. INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC AGENDAS

*Yugoslavia got caught between  
Maastricht and the Soviet union--  
between the process of integration  
and disintegration.*<sup>63</sup>

The year 1991 was marked by several major events which can be argued to have taken the attention away from Yugoslavia. One of those events was the planning for the December Maastricht Conference which was to amend the 1957 Treaty of Rome and the 1987 Single European Act to create an economic

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>John Newhouse, "Dodging the Diplomatic Round," The New Yorker, (24 August 1992) 12.

and monetary union in Europe by 1999. The European Community was gearing up for this event in hopes of negotiating a treaty which would unite all of Europe economically --including a common currency--as well as politically. After Germany was reunified in 1990, much of Europe--especially France--was anxious for European unification and made Maastricht a top priority. Trouble in Yugoslavia was therefore viewed as a possible setback toward this goal--especially once the violence began. Differences in opinion over what to do about Yugoslavia threatened to disrupt the unity desired among the European countries who were pushing for the Maastricht Treaty. Especially vocal about this were German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. The overall effect was that Yugoslavia did not receive the full amount of attention it required which inevitably gave the Serbian aggressors the message that without a unified front in the West, nothing was standing in their way.

President Bush clearly demonstrated the might and power of the U.S. during the Gulf War in 1990 and had no political need to further demonstrate superiority in another faraway land with no immediate economic national interests at hand. Anthony Lewis compared this policy with an analogy to Neville Chamberlain explaining in 1938 why Britons should not care about Nazi designs on Czechoslovakia--It was a "quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing."<sup>64</sup> The world was no longer in imminent danger of nuclear holocaust which relieved some of the pressure to act as guardian of democracy--regardless of how new. Once the decision was made, the justifications for non-intervention in the former Yugoslavia

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<sup>64</sup>Anthony Lewis, "Yesterday's Man," The New York Times (3 Aug 1992).

came flooding through the halls of the State Department, Congress, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the White House's inner circle.

### 1. The Inner Circle

According to U.S. State Department officials the Yugoslav crisis was clearly not a priority in U.S. foreign policy between 1989 and 1993. There was never a massive effort to either apply preventive measures in the Balkans nor to press for a way to intervene diplomatically or militarily once it actually became a full-blown crisis. Once the decision was made by the inner circle of the White House to keep a distance from the Yugoslav crisis, the marching orders were passed down through the State Department and policy was set. Diplomatic and especially military intervention in the former Yugoslavia was not considered on the list of priorities by the White House.

According to State Department officials, Spokesman, Margaret Tutwiler was considered the most influential person to James Baker and the inner circle during the initial phases of the Yugoslav crisis. In May 1991, Tutwiler announced that White House policy toward Yugoslavia was marked by support for Yugoslav unity, human rights, democratic rights, civil liberties and market reforms.<sup>65</sup> Tutwiler was well-informed of the events occurring in the former Yugoslavia and maintained close liaison with the State Department's Yugoslav Desk Officer and East European specialists. However, official U.S. policy was only conveyed through Tutwiler after clearance was obtained by Baker. For the most part, Baker served as speaker for White House policy. But his words were only heard a handful of times in the six

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<sup>65</sup>Margaret Tutwiler, "U.S. Policy Toward Yugoslavia," U.S. Department of State Dispatch (24 May 1991), 395.

months following the secession movements and the onslaught of violence in Croatia and Slovenia.<sup>66</sup>

It was not until word of the Yugoslav crisis became public knowledge that members of the legislative branch of government became involved in influencing policy.

## **2. Congress and Senate**

Several Congressmen and Senators became involved in seeking a solution to the problems in the former Yugoslavia as early as 1990. Most of the substantial work accomplished, however was under the auspices of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and was focused mainly on the humanitarian aspect of the crisis.

*The United States, the European Community and the UN have failed to effectively confront the humanitarian fallout of Serb nationalism gone wild. It is axiomatic that such failure leads to a massive body count.*<sup>67</sup>

The CSCE or Helsinki Commission began following the events in former Yugoslavia in 1990. Co-Chairs, Senator Dennis DeConcini and Steny H. Hoyer have made regular public statements and issued periodic reports and newsletter articles on Yugoslav political affairs. Between 1990 and 1994 four delegations were sent to former Yugoslavia in order to observe elections and human rights violations. The members of the commission--nine Congressmen and nine Senators-- have submitted several bills of legislation

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<sup>66</sup>According to the number of New York Times articles, James Baker was quoted five times between June and December 1991 with regard to the Yugoslav crisis.

<sup>67</sup>Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe One Hundred Third Congress First Session "War Crimes and the Humanitarian Crisis in the Former Yugoslavia," January 25, 1993. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993) 125.

to promote an expedient and final end to the war in Bosnia. None of them have been implemented.

Apart from the Helsinki Commission, Senator Bob Dole was one of the most vocal legislators who spoke out on behalf of democracy in the republics of the former Yugoslavia. Senator Dole offered strong statements in February 1991 at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee with regard to the threat of Communism in four struggling new democracies within the former Yugoslavia. He stated that, "the current crisis in Yugoslavia is a direct result of the spread of democracy to Eastern Europe: the problem in Yugoslavia, however, is that democracy did not spread far enough."<sup>68</sup> Senator Dole made similar comments, pleading for direct aid through the Direct Aid For Democracy Act, S.9, which would give the U.S. the flexibility to provide aid to republic level governments that are on the road to democracy, but exist within countries that have governments at the republic or federal level that are communist controlled.

### **3. Reaction From The Media and Public**

Between July and December 1991 there were over seventy articles printed in mainstream American journals and magazines regarding the former Yugoslavia. The topics were focused on the struggle for democracy, human rights, Balkan violence, ethnic tensions and historic precedence for violence. Many of the articles referred to the World War I metaphor of the "Balkan Powder Keg" and issued warnings of historic repetition. They also spoke of the danger inherent in the drive for a greater Serbia as asserted by Slobodan Milosevic and his converted communist party, now called the

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<sup>68</sup>Bob Dole, "Yugoslavia: Direct Aid for Democratic Republics," Statement of Senator Bob Dole Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 21 February 1991.

Yugoslav Socialist Party. The number of articles printed in *The New York Times* during this time-frame exceeded four-hundred and forty. Most of these articles reported on the violence within the former Yugoslavia and the escalation of war. During this time-frame the crisis in the former Yugoslavia was referred to by the *New York Times* and most of the mainstream articles as a civil war created by ethnic tensions.

Between 1990 and 1993 there were several opportunities for the U.S. to intervene on a preventive scale in the Yugoslav crisis. The first came during 1990 when a wealthy Serbian-born California businessman decided to run for President of Serbia against Milosevic. Prime Minister of the federal government of the rump state of Yugoslavia, Milan Panic offered a stabilizing connection with the West for Serbians in fear of another Tito-style government. The first free elections in Serbia since 1938 came in November 1990. Panic did not, however, receive the support he had wished for from the U.S. Milosevic won more than 56 percent of the vote. This was hardly surprising in view of his complete monopoly over every form of media for use in his campaign.<sup>69</sup>

#### H. THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ISSUES WARNINGS

On November 28, 1990, the US. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and State Department issued warnings to the White House that Yugoslavia was in imminent danger of a violent breakup and perhaps civil war. The CIA predicted the break-up would occur "most probably in the next 18 months."<sup>70</sup> The CIA cited statements by Yugoslavia's Prime Minister Ante Markovic

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<sup>69</sup>For details on Milan Panic's campaign, see Obrad Kesis, "Serbia: The Politics of Despair," *Current History*, (November 1993) 378-380.

<sup>70</sup>David Binder, "Yugoslavia Seen Breaking Up Soon," *The New York Times*, (28 Nov 1990).



saying, "The situation is characterized by growing nationalism and separatism and an alarming worsening of ethnic relations, all of which is expressed in violence, a drastic threat to public order, peace and citizens' safety."<sup>71</sup> The report issued by the CIA also included a warning that Serbian republic president Slobodan Milosevic was chiefly to blame for instigating the latest repression of Kosovo's Albanians and for stirring Serbian nationalism. In response to these warnings, the White House made a formal announcement that it favored Yugoslav unity and supported Prime Minister Ante Markovic's federal government. There was no attempt at diplomacy or peaceful dialogue by the U.S. or Europe as a result of these warnings.

The State Department reported on the events taking place in the former Yugoslavia on a daily basis by maintaining constant communications with foreign service correspondents in Belgrade. Their findings, if read by the "inner circle" would have illustrated in plain language the dangerous situation developing in the Balkans during 1990-1991. The newly elected Slovenian and Croatian administrations were both based on anti-communist and anti-socialist doctrines-- aimed directly at the Serbian regime of President Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic's threats to demand territory from neighboring republics to bring all of the country's 8.5 million Serbs into a single Serbian state, were major factors leading to the secession of Croatia and Slovenia in 1990. The drive for independence, however was met with disapproval by both the U.S. and the EC both of which continued to support a unified Yugoslavia.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

The Yugoslav military organization, led by General Veljko Kadijevic, Federal Secretary for National Defense, announced during the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) Party Conference that the military would support a society under "true socialism" and would oppose anti-socialist, pro-capitalist, and dogmatic forces. He made it clear that the army was prepared to fight against the "forces which are pulling Yugoslavia apart and undermining her defense strengths against the proponents of anti-communism and dogmatism, as well as all those who attack Tito and the achievements of the revolution."<sup>72</sup>

The CIA made attempts to warn the White House of the dangers inherent in: a) a strong communist party in Yugoslavia; and b) a blurring in the distinction between civil and military control of policy. However, by 1991, the situation in Yugoslavia had quickly escalated from a state of unrest to all out war. The warning signs in Kosovo and the transformation from communism to democracy in four of the six republics proved to be the turning point for the Yugoslav idea created in 1918. The CIA's predictions came true even earlier than originally surmised. The violent break-up of Yugoslavia began within six months of the CIA's report.

If the CIA's detailed and full report on the pending crisis in the former Yugoslavia was released to *The New York Times* in August 1990, one can certainly assume that the "inner circle" received an advance copy long before August. However, regardless of the numerous warning signs, the situation in Yugoslavia developed on its tragic course without outside intervention or

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<sup>72</sup>Jim Seroka and Vukasin Pavlovic, eds., The Tragedy of Yugoslavia, (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1992) 129.

interest. The situation turned from crisis to tragedy within days of the announcements by the first two republics to secede.

Between 1990 and 1991, the media showed a limited amount of interest in the situation in the former Yugoslavia. During this period over eighty articles were printed in the mainstream U.S. magazines and journals with regard to the situation in Croatia and Slovenia.<sup>73</sup> When Serbia attacked Slovenia and Croatia a day after their declarations of independence, the news media reported it as a "civil war." Taking their cue from Slobodan Milosevic, the media also spoke of "ancient ethnic hatreds" as if they were the sole cause of conflict in the Balkans. The civil war label was predominant in the media throughout the next two years and the ancient hatred theory came up frequently in Congress, the State Department and at the White House. Thus the stage was set for public debate over U.S. interests in a faraway land caught up in a "civil war" caused by "ancient ethnic hatreds." When in reality, the theme of democracy, human rights, and international law was at stake in the former Yugoslav republics. However, public debate was still not developed during the Croatian phase of the war. The U.S. government chose not to address the issue unless provoked and only a handful of Congressmen were interested in pursuing more information. The public debate did not heat up until the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence in April 1992--when the real crisis began.

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<sup>73</sup>See the Readers Guide of Periodicals for articles written between January 1990-December 1991 in Time; Newsweek; McClean's; U.S. News and World Report; UN Chronicle; The Nation; World Press Review; PeopleWeekly; National Review; Commentary; The Atlantic Monthly; Forbes; The American Spectator; The New Yorker and; Commonwealth.

## V. BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

*It was as if the God of War had sought out the unhappy people and called them to a day of judgement when their souls were laid bare to show to all the world the Olympian heights of virtue and the foulest cesspools of degradation of which mankind is capable.<sup>74</sup>*

Historian Muriel Heppell's above description of Yugoslavia during WWII, can easily be applied to the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The suffering and humiliation experienced during the tragedy of WWII and the Civil War is being repeated. The origins of conflict in Yugoslavia during WWII and the Civil War had little to do with ethnic differences, however, ethnicity was, indeed exploited to rouse the masses into fighting. The fact that the South Slav people speak the same language and by all outward appearances are of the same ethnic background was disregarded once the people separated themselves into Croatian and Serbian camps. The "long peace"--to quote John Lewis Gaddis's description of the Cold War--allowed time to hide and perhaps, dull the pain of this period and the Yugoslavs lived side by side--regardless of ethno-religious differences--for over forty years. However, once again, the tools of ancient hatred and ethnic differences have been recollected to incite the masses into another bloody and fratricidal war in the Balkans.

### A. PERCEPTIONS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

The White House made it clear that the initiative in responding to the events occurring in the Balkans during the Croatian phase of the war would go to the Europeans. By the time the war reached Bosnia-Herzegovina, this

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<sup>74</sup>Muriel Heppell and Frank B. Singleton, *Yugoslavia*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961) 171.

position had not changed. It did, however, begin to gradually shift more toward involvement as the public debate grew over the following year. As the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina quickly reached unimaginable levels of tragedy, public debate began to place pressure on the U.S. government. However, due to the esoteric nature of Balkan politics, this debate took some time to develop, which gave the Bush administration time to reassess their previous policy of non-intervention. It was not until the debate moved from Balkan politics to the simple argument of humanitarian intervention that the U.S. government started to act.

Public debate over the Bosnian phase of the current war in the former Yugoslavia shifted from an emphasis on historic "ancient hatreds" and focused more on the humanitarian tragedy which unfolded.

When Germany decided to recognize Croatia and Slovenia in December 1991, the U.S. "showed concern" and refused to support Germany's move.<sup>75</sup> The Bush administration held firm to this position even after all twelve members of the European Community, Austria and Switzerland recognized the independence of the two republics. President Bush asserted that recognition by the U.S. would come only after a peace settlement was reached and human rights issues were resolved in Croatia.

In January 1992, the Soviet Union officially broke apart and Yugoslavia was well on its way to total collapse. U.S. attention was fixed on providing aid to Moscow in order to bolster its disastrous economy. The U.S.'s Russocentric policies were focused on supporting President Boris Yeltsin due to a general fear of centrist and nationalist parties taking over and

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<sup>75</sup>The New York Times, (7 January 1992).

reconstituting the Soviet Union. The fighting in Croatia and Slovenia was not addressed by the Bush administration, who preferred to leave it to the European Community to handle until war in Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out in April 1992.

Public debate over the Yugoslav crisis entered a new phase when Bosnia-Herzegovina became embroiled in war. Rumors of mass killings and prison camps began to circulate among State Department officials and Congressmen between April and July 1992, concerning these allegations. However, there was not an official statement from the White House until August.

After a year of wishing that the former Yugoslavia would remain intact--similar to the wishes for an intact Soviet Union--the Bush administration finally conceded to the recognition of the break-away republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia in April 1992. The spread of war to Bosnia-Herzegovina and the blatant display of armed aggression against civilians moved the Bush administration to confront a demanding American public. Congressional hearings and debates, coupled with a greater interest in the media forced the Yugoslav crisis in front of a reluctant White House.

### **1. Decision-Making Time at the White House**

One month after the recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the international community, a whirlwind of events shook the Bush administration--and the world. George Kenney, State Department Yugoslav Desk Officer, introduced the term "ethnic cleansing" into mainstream America. War had reached Bosnia-Herzegovina in full scale and the JNA, led

by General Ratko Mladic--known as the "Butcher of Belgrade"-- began destroying all military production facilities, airports and infrastructure leading to the capital Sarajevo. Rumors of atrocities and prison camps were also circulated through the State Department corridors, however, none were confirmed. George Kenney had on several occasions called for a team of State Department foreign service officers to investigate and confirm these reports, however, his requests fell on deaf ears. The media, Congress and human rights groups, however, began hear of the growing tragedy, placing even more pressure on the Bush administration to become involved.

## **2. The Diplomatic and Humanitarian Course**

As a result of growing pressure from the developing public debate, the Bush administration began taking a series of actions--however cautious--toward involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A call for humanitarian intervention replaced Bush's realpolitik approach toward the former Yugoslavia. The first step was the suspension of landing rights for the Yugoslav National Airlines, followed by the initiation of diplomatic sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro. The U.S. also initiated discussions at the UN on Chapter VII sanctions. Secretary Baker stated in Lisbon that "before we consider force, we ought to exhaust all of the political, diplomatic, and economic remedies that might be at hand."<sup>76</sup> In addition to the sanctions, the U.S. pledged a nine million dollar contribution to assist refugees in Bosnia-Herzegovina and authorized the airlift of humanitarian aid.

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<sup>76</sup>See U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (September 1992) vol.3 for chronology of statements and actions taken by the U.S. in response to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Later in May 1992, a Serbian mortar landed in the middle of a bread queue in Sarajevo, killing a score of people. Television images reached the American public and for the first time, the Bush administration had to reconsider its assessment of the conflict. The marketplace bombing thrust Bosnia into the heat of public debate and demanded attention. The same day, a maternity hospital in Sarajevo was shelled and set ablaze, Sarajevo was under seige, and the Serbian army was identified as the aggressors. Following the marketplace bombing, the U.S. co-sponsored UN Resolution 757, which imposed economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>77</sup> By May 21, the U.S. had withdrawn all military attaches from Belgrade and closed the Yugoslav consulate in New York. After a year of "hands off" policy toward the former Yugoslavia, the White House had to shed its realpolitik approach to the former Yugoslavia and put on its "neo-interventionist" coat in order to appease a moral American society--which was precisely what it had tried to avoid.

At a Helsinki meeting of the CSCE in June, President Bush made it plain that America was not thinking of using military force to stop the conflict in Bosnia. The Europeans supported Bush's statement--themselves not wishing to become involved in another international military evolution so soon after Desert Storm. Action was, however not entirely absent.

The year 1992 was a complex one for the Bush administration. The Soviet Union had collapsed, the economy was plummeting, Europe was

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<sup>77</sup>UN Resolution 757 also imposed the freezing of assets abroad, trade sanctions, the prohibition of services related to aircraft and weapons, the prohibition of air traffic, the reduction of diplomatic staff, a ban on participation in official cultural and sporting events, and suspension of scientific and technical cooperation.



integrating and, above all, it was an election year. Politically, there was much at stake and Bosnia could barely be squeezed onto such a full plate.

## **B. THE WORLD COMMUNITY**

The World Community was divided and confused over what action to take in the former Yugoslavia--if any. The UN was the obvious and most legitimate choice to lead in the search for peace in the Balkans, but lacked the military power and money to enforce any action. The EC, the WEU, and the CSCE were all anxious to provide a forum for debate and discussion--however, action came slowly, if at all. NATO was the only organization strong enough to intervene decisively. However, the members of NATO could not reach an agreement. The U.S. was unwilling to man or back an intervention force. Without the U.S. military, a NATO coalition would not have the credibility and strength it needed to support any type of operation in the Balkans short of UN-backed NATO peacekeepers. As a result, the only decisive action by the U.S. government with regard to Bosnia, was to call for more conferences, tighten sanctions and publicly condemn the aggressors. But, public condemnation without the threat of American military might proved entirely ineffective in the face of "ethnic cleansing" by the JNA.

The world community could not stop the war in the former Yugoslavia, however, the one thing they could not ignore was the flood of refugees entering Europe. Therefore, by February 1992, the Europeans, anxious to end the overwhelming flow of refugees, pushed the UN Security Council to vote unanimously to send 14,000 peacekeepers to Yugoslavia to monitor a cease-fire and protect minority Serbs in Croatia. This was the first tangible activity by the world community with regard to the Yugoslav crisis.

## **1. UN Diplomatic Actions**

There was a loud cry for UN peacekeeping forces during this period, although the fighting parties were not yet committed to holding a ceasefire--hence there was no peace to keep. The UN imposed a series of Security Council resolutions as the first proactive step towards ending the war in the former Yugoslav republics. By May 1992, the UN announced nine resolutions toward the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The strongest of these included Resolutions 713 and 757, which established the arms embargo on all of the states of the former Yugoslav republics and applied specific economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro.

## **2. Operation Sharp Guard**

As a result of the UN Security Council resolutions, NATO began "Operation Maritime Monitor" in the Adriatic Sea to enforce the embargo and sanctions. Initially composed of naval warships from eight NATO nations, in the STANAVFORMED fleet, their mission was to challenge all inbound merchant ships regarding their cargoes and destinations.<sup>78</sup> The U.S. and the Europeans sent naval vessels and reconnaissance aircraft to the Adriatic as the first step towards monitoring the UN's trade and arms embargo of Serbia. The operation was later changed to "Sharp Guard" and continues to prevent shipping from the Adriatic into the former Yugoslavia. This gesture proved successful from the perspective of entrance by way of the Adriatic Sea. There were, however, several over-land entrances into Serbia, which served well to supply arms and supplies to the well-stocked JNA from the north and east.

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<sup>78</sup>For more information on the STANAVFORMED fleet and Operation Maritime Monitor, see J.M. Boorda, Admiral, U.S. Navy, "Loyal Partner--NATO's Forces in Support of the United Nations," NATO's Sixteen Nations, (vol 1, 1994) 8-12.

The naval blockade at least provided some show of force--appeasing Congress and the American public--and made life somewhat more difficult for the Serbs.

In January 1992, former secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, acting as a special U.N. envoy, requested 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers for immediate placement in war-torn Croatia. At that time over 10,000 people had been killed and one third of Croatia had been seized. It was clear that Bosnia was the next target for Serbia. However, the UN was unwilling to divert the peacekeepers from Croatia into Sarajevo until after the marketplace bombing.

### 3. The Group of Seven (G-7)

At a follow-up meeting in Munich in July 1992, the Group of Seven (G-7), composed of representatives from the seven most industrialized and developed nations, discussed as the last item on their agenda, the economic and political ramifications of the war in Bosnia. Results of the discussions were to implement economic sanctions in accordance with UN Resolution 757, "condemn Serbian aggressors," and "support" negotiations by Lord Carrington and the EC. They concluded by promising to consider the use of military force to ensure the delivery of food to Bosnia-Herzegovina. As he was leaving town after the summit had ended, President Bush was quoted as saying: "I don't think anybody suggests that if there is a hiccup here or there or a conflict here or there that the United States is going to send troops."<sup>79</sup> The "hiccup" he was referring to had at that point been responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 people, mostly civilians and the systematic rape of tens of thousands of Muslim women. The Serbs were reassured by the G-7 and

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<sup>79</sup>Roy Gutman, A Witness to Genocide, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993) xvii.

President Bush's statement that "condemning" the JNA and "supporting" negotiations--without the formidable U.S. military--would be the extent of western protestation.

### C. CONGRESSIONAL AND SENATE DEBATES

Congressional activity increased dramatically after Bosnia-Herzegovina declared their independence in April 1992. Between April and July, there were over fifty statements made in Congress regarding the war in the former Yugoslavia.

On May 11, 1992, a Congressional hearing took place with the CSCE to hear the testimony of Dr. Silajdzic, the Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dr. Haris Silajdzic presented an emotional plea for support to the U.S. Congress on behalf of his newly independent country. Chariman Hoyer and Co-Chariman DeConcini presented the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina as victims of "armed aggression" and "unspeakable atrocities" committed by the Serbian military and urged the CSCE to press the U.S. for stronger action to counter the violations of the CSCE principles made by Serbia.<sup>80</sup>

By July 1992, Congressional involvement with the crisis in Bosnia was still limited to the handful of representatives, mostly affiliated with the CSCE. Senator Bob Dole, spoke frequently about rumors of concentrations camps and atrocities and pleaded for government support in investigating these allegations. Senator Byrd, on the other hand, stated that "It's the European Community's problem. It's not our job to be policeman. It will cost too

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<sup>80</sup>See Implementation of the Helsinki Accords, Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe 102d Congress, Second Session, "The Crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina," May 12, 1992.

much." He added that the \$400 billion U.S. deficit could not handle another \$60 billion to intervene in a war borne of "ancient hatreds."<sup>81</sup>

#### D. THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC REACTION TO BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The fighting in Croatia was reported by the media on an occasional basis and was referred to as a civil war by most journalists between 1991 and 1992. However, it was not until war broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina and atrocities were revealed that the media became more active. This is not to say that there was not a serious and devoted effort by journalists and foreign service personnel in the field between 1991 and 1992. By January 1992, twenty-two journalist had been killed in Yugoslavia during the previous seven months.

Between January and March, news reports began to trickle into *The New York Times* which revealed atrocities far greater than had previously been reported in Croatia. However, actual CNN film footage of dead and dying civilians had not been introduced to the American public yet. Mainstream news magazines and journals were not interested in the Yugoslav conflict yet either. There were only a handful of articles and editorials written in the mainstream magazines between June 1991 and April 1992.

However, once the violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina began in April, the news media erupted with numerous front page articles and television coverage. *Time* magazine, one of the most widespread mainstream magazines in the U.S. provided a cover article on June 8, 1992 which described the bloodshed in the Sarajevo marketplace and maternity hospital.

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<sup>81</sup>See Congressional Records, August 11, 1992, for full text of Senator Byrd's statements on Bosnia.

It also described the methods used by the Serbian military to "ethnically cleanse" Bosnia-Herzegovina of all Muslim residents and used comparisons to Hitler and the "final solution" of the Jewish population in Europe.<sup>82</sup> This type of reporting was repeated in most all the other mainstream journals and magazines in the U.S.

One of the key powers held by the media is that, through language, it was able to produce the impression that the war in the former Yugoslavia is a "civil war" born of "ancient hatreds," "ultra-nationalism" and "blood feuds." The simplification of the war was underscored by the President and Secretary of State's acceptance and use of the media's language. Milosevic would have the world believe this to be true since the use of ancient hatreds, nationalism and civil war was precisely what he used to inspire his troops to fight for a Greater Serbia. In reality, Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina had already declared their independence by the time Serbia launched its attacks.

The debate over the crisis in the former Yugoslavia evolved from discussions of ancient hatreds, ethnic strife and civil war to that of the support of struggling new democracies in the post-Cold War and finally to that of basic humanitarian aid and moral obligations. The atrocities reported in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the televised aftermath of the marketplace bombing incited the public debate in the U.S. to call for action at various levels. Air strikes were not supported when the conflict was considered a civil war between ancient ethnic rivals, however, when terms like "ethnic cleansing" were bantered about, the public became more willing to flex U.S. power in the name of humanitarian intervention.

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<sup>82</sup>Jill Smolowe, "Land of the Slaughter," Time, (June 8, 1992) 32-37.

## E. CONCLUSIONS

...the United States should not seek to be the world's policeman...But in the wake of the Cold War, it is the role of the United States to marshal its moral and material resources to promote a democratic peace. It is our responsibility--it is our opportunity--to lead. There is no one else.<sup>83</sup>

Evidently, President Bush was not referring to Bosnia-Herzegovina when he spoke these words. The question one must now ask is, Why not Bosnia? The public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina may have developed too late to force the the Bush administration into responding. It may have been a case of bad timing.

It was not until August 1992 that the public debate reached a record peak. The Bush administration had to face important decisions only three months before elections when the media erupted with shattering news about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina which launched the world back in time to WWII and the atrocious systematic killing of civilians during wartime.

The Yugoslav crisis was indeed much more than a simple matter of "ethnic strife" in a "federal state" but, rather a coordinated attempt by Serbia and the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army to carve a Greater Serbia out of the republics. Furthermore, the religious divisions between Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics were kept at bay during the Tito years, which forbade religion under communism. Also, the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina were of the secular sort and were not outwardly distinguishable from any of the other South Slavs in the former Yugoslavia. The ethnic differences only became inflamed after Milosevic's successful media campaign which monopolized

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<sup>83</sup>George Bush, Address at the West Point Military Academy, West Point, New York, January 5, 1993.

every major newspaper and television station. However, the powerful historical forces drove the Bosnian conflict deeper once it had started, while gaining strength with each day and with each town left "ethnically cleansed."

By the summer of 1992, President Bush was preparing for the elections in November and was definitely not going to get the U.S. involved militarily--or unilaterally--to solve the problem. By the time the elections arrived and a new administration was later sworn in, Bosnia had been embroiled in ten months of war and "ethnic cleansing." The push for action was coming from many different angles, however, none of them powerful or loud enough to force a commitment. Even after the Clinton administration had time to settle into the White House--a year and a half into the war in Bosnia--commitment was not forthcoming. This will be discussed in the following chapter.



## VI. ETHNIC-CLEANSING

The war in Bosnia escalated dramatically between April and August of 1992. U.S. foreign policy efforts were minimal and action was clearly delegated to the Europeans. Public debate over the war emerged during the extraordinary release of information on August 2, 1992 that something was happening in Bosnia on a much grander and more horrifying scale than the American public could have imagined. Still euphemistically referred to as a "conflict" the situation was marked by reports of mass execution of civilians, concentration camps, rape camps, emolations, and the forced removal of tens of thousands of people on the basis of religious orientation. The "ancient hatreds" focused was replaced by grave humanitarian concerns in within the public debate.

### A. THE MEDIA EXPLOSION

The phrase "ethnic-cleansing", which referred to the systematic killing and removal of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was first introduced by former State Department Yugoslav Desk Officer, George Kenney on 14 May 1992.<sup>84</sup> State Department Spokesman Margaret Tutwiler used the expression at the noon briefing that day. A few Congressmen got wind of this term and repeated it during Congressional debates and hearings. It was even mentioned in *The New York Times* a few times between May and July. However, widespread use of the term and its analogy to genocide did not occur until 2 August of the same year. Journalist Roy Gutman wrote an

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<sup>84</sup>George Kenny is a former State Department Foreign Service Officer, who resigned in September 1992 to protest U.S. government policy in the former Yugoslavia. Kenney, who served as the Yugoslav desk officer at State, spoke daily with U.S. Foreign Service Officer Henry Kelley, based in Belgrade, who introduced the term "ethnic cleansing" to Kenney. The term was used by the Bosnian Serbs when describing the systematic removal any non-Serbian residents from Bosnia-Herzegovina through annihilation or forced removal.

article for *New York's Newsday* revealing the existence of concentration camps or --"death camps" as he referred to them--in Serbia.<sup>85</sup> This statement was indeed a groundbreaking article which disclosed to the world the gravity of the situation in Bosnia. Although there was no significant reaction from the U.S. government after Gutman's report, the spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sylvana Foa, stated that Gutman's article was directly related to saving at least 6,000 Bosnian Muslims from certain imprisonment and possibly from death. In fact, within weeks the Serbs moved some of the prison camps deeper into Serbian-held territory and released thousands of prisoners.<sup>86</sup> The existence of the concentration camps and the multitude of atrocities being committed in Bosnia became world news and common knowledge to the mass public in the U.S. by the end of August 1992.

### **1. Public Debate Refocuses on Humanitarian Issue**

After Gutman's article was published, over 100 articles were published in mainstream American magazines<sup>87</sup>--between August and December 1992--which discussed the matter of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Furthermore, during the month of August alone, there were over 110 speeches made in the Congress and the Senate which discussed ethnic cleansing, genocide, humanitarian aid, military intervention and diplomatic involvement by the U.S.

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<sup>85</sup>Roy Gutman was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his reportings on the Yugoslav crisis from 1990-1993. Compilations of his articles are published in his book, A Witness to Genocide (1993).

<sup>86</sup>Sherri Ricchiardi, "Exposing Genocide...For What?" Interview with Roy Gutman in American Journalism Review (June 1993) 32-37.

<sup>87</sup>Mainstream American magazines were researched in Reader's Guide to Periodicals. Included were, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, McClean's, The Nation, National Review, The New York Review of Books and Washington Monthly.

In today's world of spy satellites, early warning systems, and high technology communications systems, the "Nazi Final Solution" would seem impossible to perpetuate. Although the news media was first to publicize the depth of the atrocities being committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the U.S. government had been informed of them long before August. However, the government, for various reasons discussed in this chapter, did not seek to validate their suspicions earlier in the conflict. After Gutman's article came out, the public debate over intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina increased dramatically and the U.S. government had no choice but to become more involved.

#### **B. U.S. REACTIONS: SEE NO EVIL?**

**Serbia has no powerful outside backers such as the Soviet Union in the past. It has up to now been encouraged by Western inaction, not least by explicit statements that force would not be used.<sup>88</sup>**

The day after the Gutman article was printed, the U.S. State Department issued a statement which was released by the Department spokesman, Richard Boucher. In the statement, the department acknowledged the existence of detention centers in Bosnia and Boucher stated that "our own reports, information similar to press reports," made it clear that "Serbian forces are maintaining what they call detention centers for Croats and Muslims," and that "there have been abuses and torture and killings taking place in those areas." He went on to say that the Bush administration was "deeply concerned" and "condemned the actions." But he also said that the U.S. had no plans for responding other than in offering

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<sup>88</sup>Leslie Gelb, "Bomb Serbia?" The New York Times, (6 August 1992).

to assist the International Red Cross in seeking to relieve the suffering of civilian victims involved. He further asserted that the State Department believed that the atrocities were being committed on both sides and that there were allegations of mistreatment in Bosnian and Croatian detention centers as well.<sup>89</sup> The following day, the Bush administration "backed away" from the assertion it made the previous day that Serbian forces were torturing and killing civilians at detention centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and said "there was little it could do immediately to investigate reports of atrocities." This time the statement was made by senior State Department official, Thomas M.T. Niles. He stated that "We've not been able to have independent confirmation of these reports," although he did confirm that the camps did exist.<sup>90</sup>

On August 5, 1992, Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger--who had filled in for Baker who was working on Bush's presidential campaign at that time--announced additional U.S. actions, including a request for an emergency meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) to examine reports of alleged abuses in detention centers in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and a request that the CSCE investigate these allegations. He also indicated that the U.S. was sending monitors to Romania to evaluate the effects of UN sanctions and was developing a resolution that would call on states to collect information on "war crimes" and transmit the information to the UN Security Council.

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<sup>89</sup>David Binder, "No U.S. Action Seen On Prison Camps," The New York Times (4 August 1992).

<sup>90</sup>Clifford Krauss, "U.S. Backs Away From Charge of Serbian Abuses," The New York Times, (5 August 1992).

The White House soon realized that the public debate could not be avoided and some type of action had to be announced. The sensational evidence presented in the Gutman article and its numerous followers prompted immediate reaction from the White House. The American public--and the world--waited for President Bush to speak.

### 1. U.S. Takes First Step Towards Diplomacy

*The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a complex, convoluted conflict that grows out of age-old animosities...century-old blood-feuds...bringing peace to the Balkans will take years of work.*<sup>91</sup>

This quote by President Bush described his administration's view toward the former Yugoslavia from the very beginning of the crisis. This view may not have changed, however, the administration could no longer hide behind it to justify non-intervention. In response to the public debate over concentration camps and atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Bush administration took the first steps toward diplomatic intervention since the war began. Four days after the Gutman article, Bush announced that the U.S. was going to: 1) Support passage of a UN resolution to authorize all necessary measures to facilitate deliver of humanitarian aid; 2) Establish diplomatic relations with Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina; 3) Enhance enforcement of sanctions against Serbia; 4) Push for the stationing of international monitors to prevent the conflict from widening; and 5) Intensify consultation with NATO on measures to assist the UN in the delivery of humanitarian aid<sup>92</sup>. This was one of the first signs of dedicated U.S. interest in the Yugoslav conflict. Although, in reality, these assertions

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<sup>91</sup>Statement made by President George Bush on 6 August 1992 news conference.

<sup>92</sup>Andrew Rosenthal, "Bush Urges UN to Back Force to Get Aid Into Bosnia," The New York Times, (7 August 1992).

kept the American military completely uncommitted, it provided enough activity to satisfy the demands of American interventionists in Congress and Europe. Over the next two years that commitment slowly gained more support and strength through public debate. The next promising sign of U.S. involvement came with the London Conference later in the month.

## **2. The London Conference--26-28 August 1992**

Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger attended the London Conference to discuss the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina with his European counterparts. This was the first time the U.S. participated directly in negotiations to find a settlement in the Balkans. After denouncing Serbian aggression and describing their actions as "reckless," he stated: "To be sure, we will not settle this conflict here today in London...What we will do, I hope, is to establish a coordinated, integrated, and ongoing process of negotiations which will culminate in a reversal of Serb aggression and the integration of the former Yugoslav republics in the wider framework of a democratic Europe."<sup>93</sup> Eagleburger's forceful rhetoric accompanied his assertion that the U.S. was not going to involve itself militarily in trying to make peace and force the conflict to an end. However, his attendance was viewed as a positive sign by American interventionists and was especially welcomed by the Europeans.

Despite the public cry for action after the Gutman article--followed by dozens more in the mainstream news media--the Bush administration did not come forth with an aggressive message at the London Conference. Eagleburger did not call for action to end the tragedy at the London

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<sup>93</sup>Lawrence Eagleburger, "Intervention at the London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia," U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (31 August 1992) Vol. 3, No. 35, p.673.

Conference but his presence was a first step toward American involvement. The Bush administration at that time had its full attention devoted to the upcoming Presidential elections. Dramatic foreign policy initiatives which threatened to involve the U.S. military would have been risky to President Bush's campaign.

### C. CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITY INCREASES

During the month of August 1992, over fifty-five Congressmen and Senators made statements at Congression Hearings concerning the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Over forty percent of the statements were interventionist in tone, while less than twenty percent were adamantly opposed to U.S. military intervention--either diplomatic or military. However, all of the statements voiced grave concern over the humanitarian issue involved with the plight of the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>94</sup> Fifteen of the Congressmen and Senators made comments for the first time regarding the war in the former Yugoslavia. The humanitarian issue had touched on a sensitive nerve among those whose previous concerns were fixed on domestic issues.

Congressional debate over what the U.S. should do with regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina was at its peak during August-September 1992. House Resolution 557 and Senate Resolution 330 were both aimed at U.S. intervention in: lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims; providing humanitarian aid; initiating procedures for a war crimes tribunal;

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<sup>94</sup>See Congressional Records, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, August 1992.

tightening sanctions against Serbia; and threatening the use of force against Serbia if the humanitarian relief efforts were blocked.<sup>95</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum, a wide variety of non-interventionists in Congress, were vehemently opposed to any type of activity regarding the Balkans. Senator Byrd made a statement to the Senate which described the war in Bosnia by stating: "it derived from ancient hatreds dating back to Kosovo and hence too complicated for the U.S.; it would not be fought as easily as the Gulf War; it would cost too much for the U.S. to intervene; it is the European Community's problem; the U.S. deficit could not handle another conflict overseas; and it is not the job of the U.S. to be the world's policeman."<sup>96</sup> Other Senators and Representatives who sided with the same camp as Senator Byrd with statements to the Congress included: Coats; Stevens; Warner; Hollings; Jeffords; and Gorton.<sup>97</sup>

The recommendations presented at the Congressional Hearings on "War Crimes and the Humanitarian Crisis in the Former Yugoslavia" were originally presented by the U.S. Committee for Refugees in October 1992. The recommendations invoked what the Bush administration had hoped to avoid--Article I of the Genocide Convention. The Committee urged that the U.S. and other UN members should take whatever immediate action is necessary to end the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Even as late as January 1993, the Director, U.S. Committee for Refugees made a strong and compelling statement to Congress for "immediate and extraordinary steps to curb the genocide now occurring in Bosnia and to

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<sup>95</sup>See Congressional Records for Hearings on 11 and 25 August 1992 for full text of House Resolution 557 and Senate Resolution 330.

<sup>96</sup>See Congressional Records on 11 August 1992, statement made by Senator Byrd.

<sup>97</sup>See Congressional Records on 10-11 August 1992 for text of statements.



protect those uprooted people whose lives are at serious risk."<sup>98</sup> Senators Dole and Deconcini led the fight in Congress to pressure the White House for diplomatic and if necessary, military action to achieve peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina and remain committed to this goal.

#### D. THE WORLD COMMUNITY

After the Bosnian phase of the war began in the former Yugoslavia, the world community turned to the U.S. for salvation. The Europeans reassessed their previous desires to handle the crisis within the EC when the scope of the war became overwhelming. Several factors had affected Europe's view of the situation which included the massive flow of refugees, the threat of the war spreading to other countries in Europe, and most pressing, humanitarian nightmare that Bosnia-Herzegovina had become. Memories of human tragedy ran deep with the Europeans, who fought two world wars on their soil.

Four days after the Gutman article, Margaret Thatcher, former British Prime Minister wrote an essay for *The New York Times* in order to strike a chord with President Bush and his administration. She described the Serbian "ethnic cleansing" policy as "a term for the expulsion of the non-Serb population that combines the barbarities of Hitler's and Stalin's policies toward other nations."<sup>99</sup> The so-called Yugoslav crisis suddenly emerged into something much more serious. Gutman's article opened the floodgates for the media and public debate worldwide. The shameful memories of Nazi

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<sup>98</sup>Statement of Roger P. Winter Director, U.S. Committee for Refugees on "Human Rights and Humanitarian Needs of Refugees and Displaced Persons in and Outside Bosnia and Herzegovina" before the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) January 25, 1993.

<sup>99</sup>Margaret Thatcher, "Stop the Excuses." *The New York Times*, (6 Aug 1992).

concentration camps reopened the shameful wounds of Europeans who preached "Never Again" after it was all over. This collective guilt of Europe was shared by former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher her stabbing essay in *The New York Times*.

The analogies made between ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and the Jewish annihilation of WWII have been convincingly argued and analyzed by many European and American journalists and writers including: Nobel prize winning Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel; Nazi hunter, Simon Wiesenthal; journalists Anthony Lewis, and Roy Gutman; and such political figures as Margaret Thatcher and Zbigniew Brzezinski. *The New York Times* even quoted presidential candidate Bill Clinton on August 5, 1992, two days after the Gutman article: "If the horrors of the Holocaust taught us anything, it is the high cost of remaining silent and paralyzed in the face of genocide."<sup>100</sup>

#### **E. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN TURMOIL**

After a year of working around the clock with the Gulf War, the State Department faced the war in Bosnia with mixed emotions. The closest people to the problem were naturally the foreign service officers working on the Yugoslav and East European desks. Mr. George Kenney was the Yugoslav desk officer when Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence and war broke out. Throughout the spring and summer of 1992, he maintained daily contact on the telephone or wire with his foreign service counterpart in Yugoslavia. It was through his contacts in Belgrade that Kenney received the first information on the strategy of "ethnic cleansing" being used by the Serbs in early May 1992. It was Kenney who introduced the term into the

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<sup>100</sup>Clifford Kraus, "U.S. Backs Off Report on Serbian Abuses," *The New York Times*, (5 Aug 1992) A1.

international lexicon on May 14, 1992, by placing it in the draft of "guidance," the policy-approved material that the State Department spokesman--Margaret Tutwiler--used as the basis for public statements. Kenney sent a proposal through his superiors to send a State Department team over to the former Yugoslavia on a fact-finding mission. This idea was immediately dismissed and Kenney had to continue to rely on cables from his Belgrade contacts. Despite the reports of atrocities and aggression by the Serbs which Kenney provided his superiors on a daily basis, the Bush administration refused to take stronger steps toward halting the conflict--either with diplomatic or military pressure. The argument used by high level State officials was that the atrocities were being committed by both sides and President Bush still wished to let the Europeans handle it. Even after the Gutman article came out, the Bush administration refused to send a team of officials to confirm the reports of Serbian genocide in concentration camps. Kenney affirmed that had it done so, there would have been a very compelling argument to invoke the UN Genocide Convention to act decisively to stop the Serbs.<sup>101</sup>

On August 26, Kenney announced his resignation in order to protest the Bush administration's "ineffective" and "counterproductive" handling of the war in the former Yugoslavia. Within the next year, two more government officials resigned also to protest the government's handling of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>102</sup>

The revelation of Gutman's article and the acts of resignation from the State Department moved the public debate over Bosnia-Herzegovina into a

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<sup>101</sup>George Kenney, former State Department Yugoslav Desk Officer, Washington D.C. interview by author, July 26, 1994.

<sup>102</sup>George Kenney, former State Department Yugoslav Desk Officer of Washington D.C., interview by author, May 20, 1994.

new realm of reality for the U.S. government. Heightened Congressional activity, State Department frustration, greater media interest, lobbying efforts and European anxiety gave the U.S. government a great deal to ponder during the 1992 election campaign. By January 1993, more Americans were willing to consider military intervention for humanitarian purposes than they had been nine months earlier.<sup>103</sup> However, during the period November 1992-January 1993, the public debate was focused on the presidential election and the new administration. The American public debate over Bosnia-Herzegovina was put on hold wait until the domestic dust settled after the new year and new administration in the White House. But the one million displaced Bosnian Muslims had already been waiting for nine months.

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<sup>103</sup>Gallup Poll conducted January 28-29 1993 found that 57 percent of Americans favoring using U.S. ground forces to restore peace and humanitarian aid in Bosnia and 63 percent favored using U.S. Aircraft to enforce the no-fly zone.

## VII. THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION: 1993-PRESENT

When President Clinton took office in January 1993, the war in Bosnia was ten months old and what was once known as Yugoslavia had been gone for almost two years. President Clinton faced the same issues and decisions which paralyzed the Bush administration: 1) What were the U.S. national interests?; 2) Is there a risk-free solution through diplomatic mediation?; 3) Would the Europeans be able to handle the situation on their own?; and 4) Could U.S./NATO air strikes be used in a limited way, without dragging the U.S. into a ground war? The campaign rhetoric used by President Clinton the year before was filled with humanitarian and interventionist undertones and used to attack President Bush's realpolitik approach, which called for non-intervention. However, when the Clinton administration faced the decision between intervention and isolation, the decision was complicated by the humanitarian aspect of the public debate. Nevertheless, the Clinton team did not address either specific actions or the desire to remain uninvolved in the war in Bosnia until after they attempted to garner support for their campaign-promises in health care, lifting the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces, and slashing the defense budget. In the final analysis, both administrations achieved the same results, which was humanitarian support--at arms length--and, ultimately a kind of non-intervention.

This chapter analyzes the public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the first year of President Clinton's administration. Throughout 1993 and certainly by the end of the year, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina became old news and relegated behind the debate over health

care reform and the troubled economy in the U.S.<sup>104</sup> Public debate over Bosnia, however, remained constant in Congress and among the various international humanitarian organizations. Labeling the war as: Civil; tribal; ethnic; religious; or ancient was no longer a primary focus of debate. The war was now, in 1993-1994, framed by the public debate as a humanitarian situation. The humanitarian impact of the war on the Europeans had begun to wear on those states who were taking in the flood of close to one and a half million refugees.<sup>105</sup> The pressure for U.S. intervention now came from the Europeans, who realized after two years, that they could not go it alone.

#### **A. CLINTON'S FIRST YEAR: RHETORIC OR ACTION?**

By the time the Clinton administration took over the White House, the public debate over the war in the former Yugoslavia had evolved into a new stage. It was no longer thought of purely in terms of a "civil war" or a fight for post-Cold War democracy. The humanitarian aspect of the war became the most pronounced feature addressed by the American public.

During February 1993, President Clinton was in the midst of a major change in military policy and structure. He forced the Pentagon to take steps to overturn the ban on homosexuals in the military and forced the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to cut ten billion dollars more from the military budget than proposed by Bush. President Clinton, was, therefore not in a strong position during the month of February to ask the military to get involved in

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<sup>104</sup>This is based on the number of front page New York Times articles covering the war in Bosnia. During 1992 there were one-hundred twelve front-page articles and in 1993, there were only .

<sup>105</sup>United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistic as of December 1993.

Bosnia--which was also opposed by General Colin Powell, Chairman of the JCS and Rear Admiral Mike W. Cramer, top intelligence official on the JCS.<sup>106</sup>

The Clinton Administration refused to support the Vance Owen plan in a statement made by George Stephanopoulos, White House spokesman on 3 February 1993. He stated that the President was working on "his own approach" which would be unveiled "relatively soon."<sup>107</sup> He referred to the Vance-Owen plan as a flawed initiative which gave too much territory to the Serbs, which would be unacceptable to the Muslims. The Clinton administration was also willing to work with Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance and the Balkan parties in negotiating a new plan that would not leave the Bosnian Muslims at such a severe disadvantage. President Clinton stated specifically that he was "reluctant to impose an agreement on the parties to which they do not agree...and cannot be enforced internally."<sup>108</sup>

The Clinton administration issued several statements during their first year in office regarding the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many of the statements gave the impression of action and initiative, however, upon further analysis, the so-called proposals proved to be more rhetorical than substantial. Furthermore, U.S. foreign policy in the former Yugoslavia was not articulated by the President himself, but rather, by either the Secretary of State or State Department spokesmen.

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Thomas Friedman, "U.S. Will Not Push Muslims to Accept Peace Plan," The New York Times, (2 February 1993).

<sup>108</sup>Gwen Hill, "Clinton and Mulroney Fault Balkan Peace Plan," The New York Times, (6 February 1993).

## B. CLINTON'S INNER CIRCLE

Unlike his predecessors, President Clinton's inner circle of foreign affairs advisors were not as outspoken and bold when it came to foreign policy. The attitude of the White House towards the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina during 1993 had to be pieced together from State Department briefings and the occasional official statement made by Secretary of State Warren Christopher. President Clinton's statements usually consisted of broad rhetorical strokes denouncing the "ethnic cleansing" and tragic state of the Bosnian people. In an effort to appear as if action might be considered by the administration, a few non-committing initiatives were announced now and then.

### 1. The "Six Step" Approach

On February 10, Warren Christopher, Secretary of State announced President Clinton's "Six-Step Approach" with regard to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He asserted that the U.S. national interest in Bosnia lay in the fact that "We are committed to Europe's stability. Our values and interests give us reason to help create an international standard for the fair treatment of minorities. Therefore, we have reasons to participate actively in this effort."<sup>109</sup> The six steps proposed by the Clinton administration included: 1) Direct and active U.S. participation in the Vance-Owen negotiations; 2) Pressure on the Serbs, Bosnians and Croats in the negotiations and craft a workable solution as opposed to imposing a settlement; 3) Tighten the enforcement of economic sanctions, increase political pressure on Serbia and

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<sup>109</sup>Warren Christopher, "New Steps Toward Conflict Resolution In The Former Yugoslavia," Opening statement at a news conference, Washington, DC, February 10, 1993, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (15 February 1993).



deter Serbia from widening the war; 4) Enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia under a new UN resolution and further actions to promote delivery of aid; 5) Help implement and enforce an agreement that is acceptable to all parties; and 6) Consult widely with friends and allies on the above actions.<sup>110</sup> The word "actions" was used to describe Clinton's steps, however, the only immediate action actually taken was the tightening of economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro in April 1993.<sup>111</sup>

## **2. The Joint Action Plan**

In May 1993, Secretary Christopher announced the details of a "Joint Action Program" of steps designed to end the bloodshed in Bosnia. The members of the action committee included the members of the UN Security Council--French Foreign Minister Juppe, United Kingdom Foreign secretary Hurd, Spanish Foreign Minister Solana, Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev, and U.S. Secretary of State Christopher. The plan consisted of ten major points which focused on: humanitarian assistance; strengthening sanctions; sealing borders; protecting designated "safe areas"; enforcing no-fly zones; establishing war crimes tribunals; implementing a durable peace; stopping the policy of "ethnic cleansing;" and containing the fighting.<sup>112</sup>

## **3. Use of Force Considered**

As a result of the humanitarian disaster in Bosnia, by July, the State Department indicated a change in attitude towards the use of force to support

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<sup>110</sup>Warren Christopher, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (April 5, 1993).

<sup>111</sup>See full text of President Clinton's letter sent to the Congress, released by the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, DC, April 26, 1993 as printed in U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (May 3, 1993).

<sup>112</sup>Warren Christopher, "Announcement of the Joint Action Program on the Conflict in Bosnia," Opening statement at a joint news conference, Washington, DC, May 22, 1993. U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (May 24, 1993).

humanitarian relief, which inferred a desire to work with the European Community and the UN for possible multi-lateral military intervention. Michael McCurry, State Department spokesman announced, "We're discussing with our allies how best to support the peace negotiations that are under way in Geneva and how to alleviate the deteriorating humanitarian situation ..." This announcement also endorsed the considerations of the possible use of air strikes to support humanitarian missions to Bosnia, but not for the purpose of rolling back the Serbian gains or to try to "turn the tide in the bitter fighting."<sup>113</sup>

In contrast to McCurry's statements, which took on a decisive and active tone, Warren Christopher made statements which indicated that the U.S. would not act in Bosnia until the Europeans did. Christopher called Bosnia, "the world's most difficult diplomatic problem," but added, "The United States is doing all that it can consistent with our national interest." These statements came after Christopher's trip to Europe, which was made to press the Europeans into accepting a full-blown "American plan of action", which called for arming the Bosnian Muslims to end the then sixteen-month-old war. Christopher returned to America without the European agreement which was not followed up with any further approach by the administration or the President.<sup>114</sup>

### C. THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

The "ethnic-cleansing" campaign in Bosnia was widely publicized in the U.S. between August 1992 and July 1993. This changed the public debate

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<sup>113</sup>Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Weighs Wider Role for Bosnian Air Strikes," The New York Times, (30 July 1993).

<sup>114</sup>Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. Won't Act in Bosnia Until the Europeans Do," The New York Times, (22 July 1993).

by altering the view of the situation from one of a "civil war" being waged between two distinct factions to one of a clearly defined aggressor committing genocide against a clearly defined victim. During the first year of the Clinton administration, the war in Bosnia was discussed over 148 times on the front page of *The New York Times*, over 210 times in featured articles in mainstream news magazines and journals, and over 100 times in Congressional debates. Over ninety percent of the articles and statements referred to the humanitarian and "ethnic cleansing" aspect of the war, while a mere ten percent spoke of democracy, ancient hatreds, or civil war.

#### **D. THE WORLD COMMUNITY DIVIDED**

The world community remained divided over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina throughout the year 1993. Despite the Vance-Owen plan, economic sanctions, arms embargo and the UN Protection Force, a solution to the Balkan problem was nowhere in sight by the end of the year. All the above mentioned efforts--however noble and individually sound-- were missing the key element of strong and credible leadership. Although the European Community initially indicated a willingness to handle the Balkan crisis, both Presidents Clinton and Bush, as leaders of the only remaining superpower in the world, received pressure to take the role of leader as time went by and the crisis developed.

1. "Never Again?"

*...everyone today is retroactively "Churchillian." We retroactively condemn Neville Chamberlain for his appeasement, we laud Churchill for his foresight and his courage in making truly difficult choices in the face of evil.*<sup>115</sup>

Zbigniew Brzezinski evoked the ghosts of the Nazi Holocaust in his essay in *The New York Times* in April 1993 to protest U.S. inaction. Similar criticisms of the world community--namely Western powers--came from Winston S. Churchill, grandson of WWII British Prime Minister, and Conservative member of Parliament. Both Brzezinski and Churchill advised the West to bomb Serbia and arm the Muslims. Many others, including, Margaret Thatcher, George Schultz, Elie Wiesel, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Albert Wohlstetter, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan,<sup>116</sup> the late Richard Nixon, and Henry Kissinger also agreed that this was the wisest course of action in the spring of 1993.

The change in the public debate and attitude toward the Bosnian situation to a humanitarian framework forced the Clinton administration to reassess its options and interests in Bosnia. Taking his cue from General Colin Powell, who offered the same opinion to President Bush, Clinton was convinced that the only unilateral military option available to him entailed a massive deployment of ground forces to impose a permanent peace. Clinton was not ready to call for this action. However, prompted by public pressure

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<sup>115</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski, "'Never Again'--Except for Bosnia," *The New York Times*, (22 April 1993).

<sup>116</sup>An open letter to President Clinton and Other Western Heads of State was published in *World Affairs*, (Fall 1993) urging Western governments to intervene in Bosnia to end the ethnic cleansing and stem Serbian aggression. Western military force was particularly called for to indicate to aggressors such as the Serbs that attacks on members of the United Nations will not be tolerated.

concerning the humanitarian tragedy, he was willing to call upon the international community to push for a wider role in protecting humanitarian relief missions with the possible use of air strikes. Meanwhile, throughout the remainder of 1993 and into 1994, the west debated over strategies and interests, while the ethnic cleansing campaign continued in full force throughout Bosnia.

In addition to the lack of leadership in the world community, there was a lack of consensus over how to handle the crisis--and what organization was best suited to take action. The major force pushing European action was the influx of refugees into East-Central and Western Europe as well as the possible spread of the war into surrounding states. The U.S., however, did not articulate its national interests in the Balkan conflict until it became a humanitarian and moral issue--according to public debate.

While the world community placed all its hopes on the Vance-Owen Plan, its success depended largely on U.S. support and the credibility of enforcement. The U.S. was unwilling, however, to support the plan as it was presented.

## **2. Debate Over the Vance-Owen Plan**

International mediators in the UN and EC called for the U.S. to: 1) Support the use of NATO war planes to enforce the provisions of the proposed peace plan; 2) Provide satellite communications for the twenty-five thousand member UN peacekeeping force that would be sent if the Vance-Owen plan were to be imposed; and 3) Lead in the creation of a new

international court to try those accused of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia as well as a commission to monitor human rights issues.<sup>117</sup>

Without the full weight of the U.S. behind the Vance-Owen plan, it had little chance of surviving. The lack of U.S. support and President Clinton's criticism of the plan sent immediate signals to both the Serbs and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia that the West was divided over its attitudes towards the Balkans, which gave both parties little incentive to accept the plan. Statements made by the Clinton administration suggested that the Vance-Owen plan rewarded "ethnic cleansing" and "would invite further aggression and magnify the ethnic tensions with its division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into ten separate autonomous provinces with a weak central government."<sup>118</sup> The plan was doomed thereafter.

### 3. The United Nations

The UN Security Council adopted resolutions 819, 824, and 836 in 1993 in order to establish "safe areas"--also referred to as "safe havens"-- in Bosnia-Herzegovina where displaced Bosnians could reside until peace is established. These areas were also designated as humanitarian aid delivery centers which were to be protected by the UN peacekeeping force.<sup>119</sup> The "safe areas", however, did not curb the "ethnic cleansing" campaign nor did it prevent the Serbs from attacking. All designated "safe areas" were attacked by mortar and tanks by the end of 1993.

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<sup>117</sup>Paul Lewis, "Balkan Mediators As U.S. Assent for NATO Planes to Keep Peace," The New York Times, (6 February 1993).

<sup>118</sup>Friedman, (4 Feb 1993).

<sup>119</sup>For text of UN Security Council resolution 836, see U.S. Department of State Dispatch, (June 7, 1993)/

#### **4. CSCE Activity Intensifies**

The CSCE remained extremely active throughout 1993 in speaking out against the war crimes and humanitarian tragedy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, without an enforcement arm, the brilliant ideas discussed during CSCE fora, merely get printed and filed into Congressional Records without a second thought. The influence of CSCE findings in the Helsinki Commissions to the Balkans played a tremendous role in educating and framing heated Congressional debate over intervention and isolation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In April 1993, the fourth congressional delegation to the Balkans was organized and visited Macedonia and Kosovo. Fear of the war spreading into these areas was a major issue among CSCE member-states and Macedonia and Kosovo were at the most imminent risk. There were also ten additional hearings held between January and October 1993 on the following aspects of the war: War Crimes and Humanitarian Crisis in the Former Yugoslavia; European Perspectives on the Bosnian Conflict; Systematic Rape and Forced impregnation of Bosnian Women; the Spillover Potential of the war into other regions; the Fate of Refugees; the Children of Sarajevo and more on Human Rights.

#### **E. CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITY**

Congressional debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina increased throughout the first year of the Clinton administration. The handful of Congressmen and Senators who had been originally involved and well-educated in the political and historical events in the Balkans from the beginning of the war, continued, in full force, to push for action by the U.S.

government. They were followed in 1993 a gaggle of new faces during the Clinton administration, who had shown a sudden interest in the current war. However, most of the new faces were prompted either by the "ethnic cleansing" campaign and the possibility of constituents sending their sons to fight a war in a "faraway land in which we know nothing"--to again quote Neville Chamberlain.

In January 1993, Congressmen Hoyer, McCloskey, and Smith presented House Resolution 35 to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. It was then presented by Senators DeConcini, Dole, Lieberman, D'Amato, Lugar and Pressler--all veterans in the fight for Balkan foreign policy initiatives-- which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. The resolution called for U.S. action in assembling a multinational coalition to: 1) immediately enforce the UN "no-fly" zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina; 2) ensure that irregular forces in Bosnia either withdraw or be disbanded and disarmed or be subject to the use of military air force; 3) ensure the immediate, effective and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to all civilians in Bosnia-Herzegovina, through the use of force, if necessary; 4) ensure access to all camps, prisons and detention centers by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international humanitarian organizations and facilitate the release of all detainees; 5) seek an increase in the number of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina permitted to enter the U.S. and other European countries; 6) work to ensure that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity are held accountable by an international criminal tribunal; and 7) act, without delay, to uphold Bosnia-Herzegovina's right to self-defense



according to Article 51 of the UN Charter, which states the right to individual or collective defense if an armed attack occurs against a member state.<sup>120</sup>

The provisions of House Resolution 35 and Senate Resolution 11 were printed in mainstream newspapers the following week in order to capture public support. Images of the concentration camps and civilian suffering on CNN and other forms of media in the U.S. had waned since August 1992 and the country was fixed on the newly elected president and his numerous domestic campaign promises. However, Congressional activity continued with regard to the war in Bosnia throughout 1993. By the end of the year Congress had debated over what, if any action should be taken by the U.S.--either unilaterally or multi-laterally--in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Meanwhile, the war raged on and the death toll mounted to over 200,000 and the number of refugees and missing persons surpassed 1.5 million.

However, not all Congressmen agreed with intervention in Bosnia and spoke of "entangling alliances" and "Vietnam quagmires" rather than of democracy and human rights. The debate over intervention and non-intervention was also not confined within partisan platforms. There was an even mix of democrats and republicans supporting both views. In April, Senator Jeffords, a Republican member of the Foreign Relations Committee supported air strikes against Serbia, however stated, "We're all scared to death of public reaction to things that have a Vietnam overtone." Many Congressmen who were veterans of the Vietnam war also warned the public that fighting in Bosnia would be more comparable to Vietnam than to the Gulf War due to terrain and the nature of guerrilla warfare. Senator Leahy, a

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<sup>120</sup>See Congressional Records, 103d Congress, 1st Session, H.RES. 35, January 21, 1993 and Senate Resolution 11, January 22, 1993.

Democrat of Vermont, asserted that bombing the Serbs would not deter their aggression and, "The next move would have to be ground troops, " something he feared the American people were not ready for or willing to support. Senator McCain, a senior Republican member of the Armed Forces Committee, stated, " I have yet to talk to a military expert who believes that air strikes alone will beneficially affect that tragic situation."<sup>121</sup>

The debate in Congress also focused on whether the crisis in Bosnia is more resonant of the Holocaust or Vietnam. This debate was evident in both parties and crossed old fault lines of the old doves and hawks. Senator Paul Simon asked the opponents of intervention, "What happens next if we do nothing?" Senator Patrick Moynihan responded, "Another museum," a reference to the new Holocaust Museum in Washington.<sup>122</sup> The moral outrage expressed by Congressmen continued throughout the remainder of the year-- without achieving a consensus.

The mixed Congressional debate over action in Bosnia compounded the Clinton administration's efforts to move decisively. There was also the additional battle with Congress over Clinton's spending portion of the economic stimulus package, health care reform, the drastic cut in the military budget and the issue of homosexuals in the military.

Regardless of the numerous issues which faced the new Clinton administration and the heated debates in Congress, a clearly defined foreign policy statement was not presented by the President with regard to the war in Bosnia. The only official announcement of any sort came from the Secretary

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<sup>121</sup>Clifford Krauss, "Many in Congress Citing Vietnam, Oppose Attacks," The New York Times, (28 April 1993).

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

of State in April 1993. Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, announced the Clinton administration's four strict guidelines for the use of force overseas:

1) the goal must be stated clearly; 2) there must be a strong likelihood of success; 3) there must be "an exit strategy" and; 4) the action must win sustained public support. However decisive this announcement may have been, it was not accompanied by a direct statement with regard to Bosnia and merely paved the way for non-intervention.

The Clinton administration's failure to convey foreign policy in Bosnia gave the American public as well as the world community reason to worry. Some analysts assert that "it is better for a President to act ineptly than to fail to act at all."<sup>123</sup> The examples used to illustrate this point showed that polling data during President Kennedy's term indicated that his popularity rose nearly as much following his dismal handling of the Bay of Pigs invasion as after his successful management of the Cuban missile crisis. President Ford's most popular days in office came after his decision to send in the marines to rescue the crew of the *Mayaguez*, the American ship captured by Cambodian troops in 1975. The American public gave Ford high marks on his decisiveness and his defense of American honor, despite the ill conceived and poorly executed manner of the action taken.<sup>124</sup> President Reagan's invasion of Grenada and President Bush's initiative in the Gulf War were also followed immediately by high poll ratings. Action in the former Yugoslavia has come in small spurts from the U.S. as well as the world community. In the absence of decisive action and persuasion from the White

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<sup>123</sup>John F. Mueller, War, Presidents, and Public Opinion (New York: Wiley, 1973) quoted in W. Lance Bennett, Public Opinion in American Politics, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1980) 353.

<sup>124</sup>Bennett, 354.

House, the American public and Congress was allowed the time to dwell on the subject of intervention on their own. Meanwhile, the "ethnic cleansing" campaign continued while Bosnia-Herzegovina lost over two-thirds of its territory to Serbia.

The public debate also also focused on the issue of genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since late 1992 and throughout the first year of the Clinton administration, pressure on the U.S. government mounted to make an unequivocal determination that the Serb campaign in Bosnia constitutes genocide under the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. External pressures from the media were accompanied by human rights organizations, American Jewish and Moslem advocacy groups, and prominent foreign policy experts. Richard Johnson, a former State Department official wrote an article which was presented to Congress stating that, "senior government officials know that Serb leaders are waging genocide in Bosnia, but will not say so in plain English because this would raise the pressures for U.S. action."<sup>125</sup> Mr. Johnson, like Mr. Kenney and other State Department officials have spoken out to the public about their dismay over foreign policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina in hopes of being more effective as individuals on the outside rather than watch from the frustrating point of view within the State Department.

The in-fighting and strong differences of opinion among Congress, the White House, the State Department and public opinion have served to alienate the real situation at hand. The Muslim population in Bosnia-Herzegovina began to lose hope for a western savior to rescue them from

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<sup>125</sup>See Richard Johnson, "The Pin-Stripe Approach to Genocide," published in 1993 and printed in Congressional Records, on February 22, 1994 as presented by Congressman Frank McCloskey.

Serbian aggression. They, therefore resumed their plea to end the arms embargo in order to defend themselves. The media--as well as some members of Congress--launched a campaign in mid-1993 to address the issue of lifting the embargo, but failed to create enough pressure to change policy. President Clinton is on record for supporting the lifting of the embargo, however, is not on record for placing pressure on the international community for doing so. He even stated in July 1993, that "the refusal of key European allies to approve his proposal to end the fighting in Bosnia by arming the Bosnian Muslims created the current deteriorating situation, which could have been avoided."<sup>126</sup> However, this statement was followed by Michael McCurry's statement the following day that the administration would not start a new effort in the Security Council to persuade the allies to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian Government.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, the administration was able to voice aggressive rhetoric without actually having to pursue any action. A unilateral lifting of the embargo would send the wrong signal about UN sanctions and embargoes, thereby undermining the only legitimate supranational organization capable of controlling some sense of international order in the world. The U.S. government would not risk that possibility. Nevertheless, the debate over lifting the embargo continued within Congress, the media and the world community throughout the rest of 1993.

By the end of the year, however, there was a sharp decline in the number of front page news articles and cover stories on the war in Bosnia. Between October and December, *The New York Times* only printed thirteen

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<sup>126</sup>Bill Clinton on CNN program "Larry King Live" July 20, 1993.

<sup>127</sup>Sciolino, 22 July 1993.

front page articles concerning the war in Bosnia. During the first nine months of the Clinton administration, there were an average of fifteen front page articles per month. It had become old news, replaced by domestic worries, political scandals and health care reform. The ease in public debate at least took the pressure off of the government to intervene--at least until the next marketplace bombing.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

To get a clear picture of the future of U.S. foreign policy, one must look at the evolution of public debate over the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. An examination of Appendix A., shows that during the Croatian phase and initial Bosnian phase of the war, the "ancient hatreds" theory and stigma of civil war were predominant in public debate. This was also the period in which non-intervention was the prevailing opinion, disregarding humanitarian interests or concern for struggling democracies.

Chapter II provided a brief description of the complex nature of Balkan history. The public debate focused on the "ancient hatreds" theory that the war in the former Yugoslavia was the result of centuries-old blood feuds and suppressed ethnic tensions. However, the "Milosevic Factor" was completely ignored. The media and U.S. government embraced the "ancient hatreds" theory as a way to avoid intervention. The war was considered too complicated. Memories of Vietnam were used to warn the public about potential quagmire situations. This theory was successfully applied during the Croatian phase of the war.

However, public debate made a sharp turn in August 1992 after the Gutman article revealing Nazi-style concentration camps and "ethnic cleansing" opened the floodgates to the media and public interest. All of the actors involved in public debate over Bosnia immediately focused on the humanitarian tragedy. The horrors of "ethnic cleansing" evoked memories of the Nazi annihilation of the Jews during WWII and the "Never Again" school of thought among Congressmen, the media, lobby groups and the American public.

This new focus not only stimulated public debate, but produced a swarm of new actors. Both professional and grassroots lobby groups came out in numbers to speak out about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Congressmen and Senators, who had previously contributed little, if anything to the debate over Bosnia, suddenly spoke up with emotional pleas for action. And, of course, the media, flooded the public with front page and feature articles, as well as television coverage of the events in the Balkans.

As a result of this heightened attention in the Balkans, the U.S. government had no choice but to respond in some way. However, this response, while appearing to be interventionist, was extremely limited and piecemeal. Chapter VII discussed the initiatives of the Clinton administration, which served to appease the American public, while keeping a safe distance from Balkan affairs.

The humanitarian air drops provided the Bosnian Muslims a sense of hope. However, the war continued to drag on for another year. The debate over intervention, however began to heighten when the "ethnic cleansing" campaign did not abate during 1993. Congress, the CSCE, and several lobby groups also called for the world community to lift the arms embargo. Although President Clinton frequently suggested this tactic, the world community refused to arm the Muslims. The Clinton administration also refused to lift the embargo unilaterally.

During 1993, the public debate continued to progress, however, still focused on the humanitarian aspect of the war in Bosnia. The "ancient hatreds" theory was no longer brought up as frequently as it had been during the initial phase of the war. The debate also focused more on the argument of



intervention. However, there were still threads of hope placed in the Vance-Owen plan, which has still not been accepted.

Congressional involvement increased as the violence in Bosnia worsened throughout 1993 and 1994, which prompted the President to switch to a tougher stance. However, support for this strong rhetoric came in the form of "pin prick" NATO air strikes on Serbian targets, which did nothing to deter the Serbs from continuing their "ethnic cleansing " campaign.

Public debate has tapered off drastically in the media. It has been replaced by new crises and threats in Haiti and the Persian Gulf. Domestic concerns over health care, the economy and political scandals have also taken center stage again in the American public debate. However, behind the scenes, there are still Congressmen, Senators, and grassroots organizations who are dedicated to the humanitarian cause to save Bosnia, perhaps until the war is over--or the annihilation ceases.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is but one example of tragedy unfolding across the globe. The public debate over U.S. interests in the worst European conflict since WWII, should be a warning to the world that the U.S. has refocused its interests toward humanitarian concerns when faced with conflicts considered to be regional or of "ethnic" origins. However, should also warn the U.S. government that foreign policy decisions cannot afford to wait for the public debate to develop. As described in this thesis, the public debate took two years to become fully developed. Once the debate evolved, the humanitarian aspect of the war emerged as the major concern among the actors.

The problems of the post-Cold War world are still emerging. Public debate over foreign policy issues provides an excellent opportunity to address U.S. responsibilities in the new world. These responsibilities do not necessarily involve military intervention in every corner of the world. However, guidelines must be established in order that the American government can make timely foreign policy decisions.

Crisis prevention and preventive diplomacy are the tools which must be used to prepare the U.S. for such tragedies as the one in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Without an established foreign policy doctrine, future conflicts in the world may receive the same indecisive treatment by the U.S. as the former Yugoslavia experienced over the past three years.

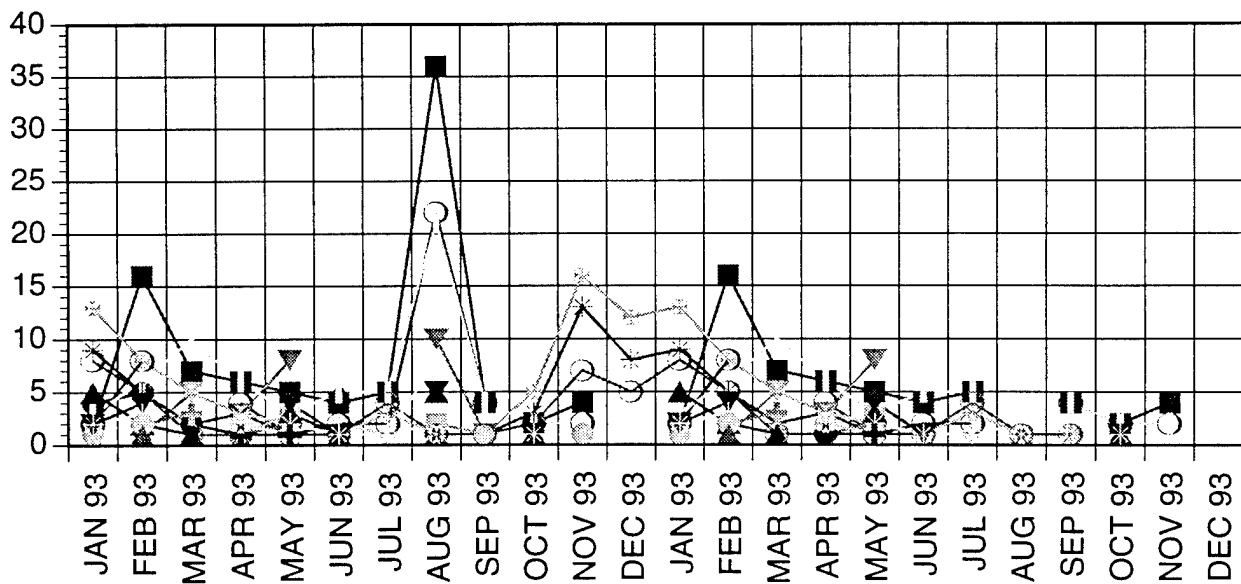
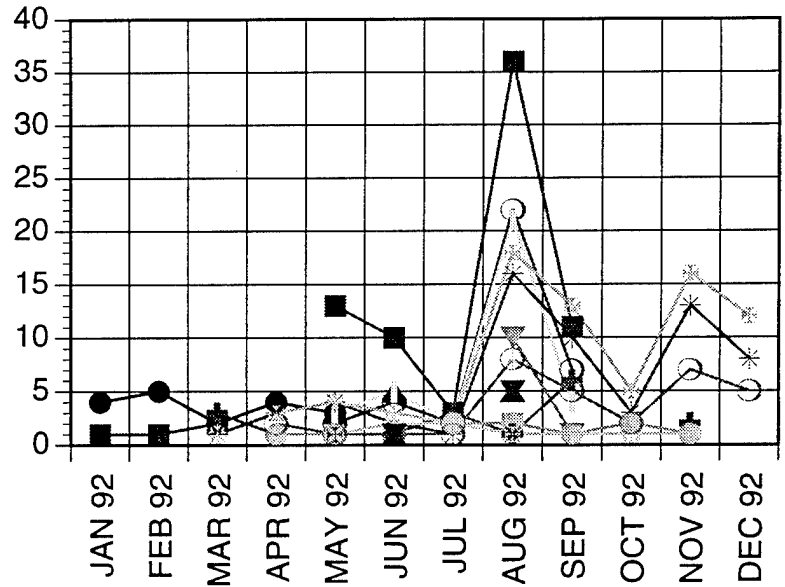
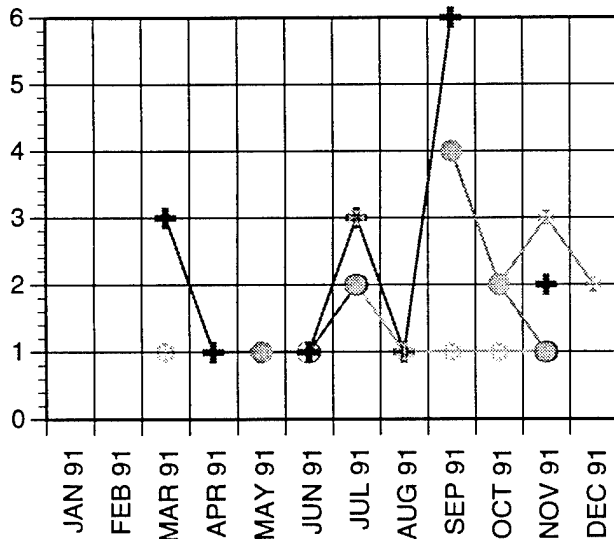
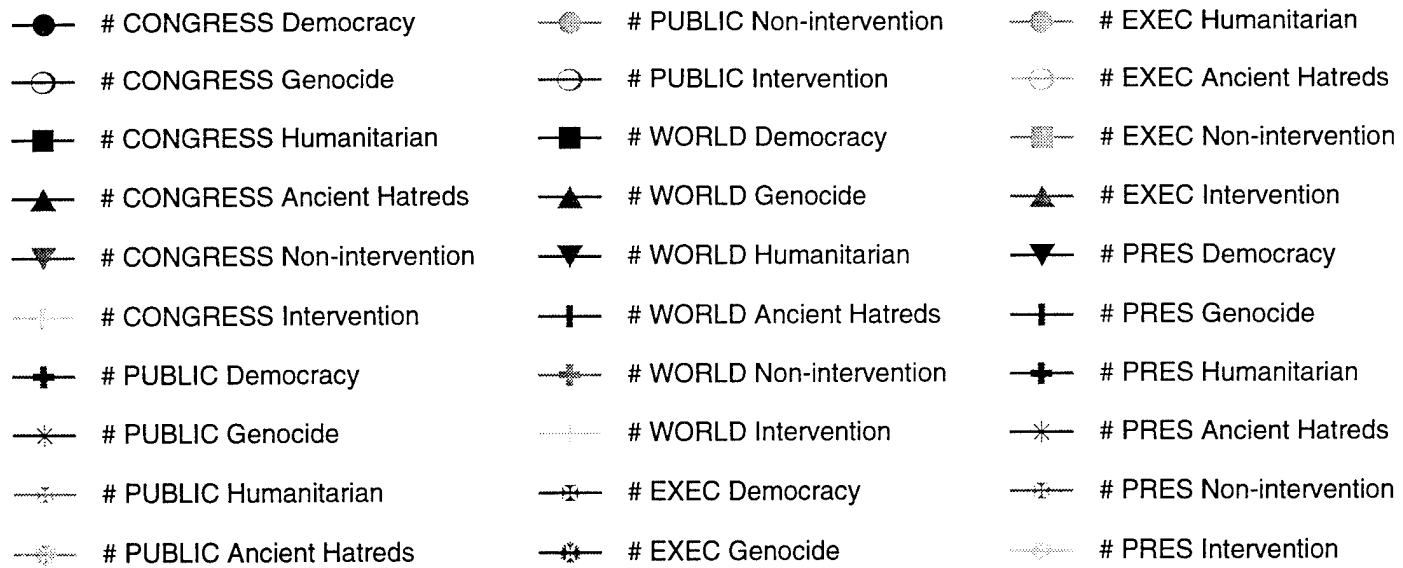
Crisis management requires vast amounts of financial and human resources. The U.S. must weigh the costs of prolonged humanitarian intervention with the short-term and less costly approach of preventive diplomacy. The failure of the Vance-Owen plan is attributed to its untimely arrival and limited scope. Had the world community taken a more serious look at the events unfolding in the former Yugoslavia during 1990, perhaps a diplomatic course could have saved the tragedy which emerged.

The chapter on genocide in the twentieth century has not been closed. It is up to the world community, with the U.S. as its leader, to decide how it wishes to be depicted by future generations. Genocide is not an uncommon occurrence in this century. Armenia, Ukraine, Europe, Cambodia, and Bosnia are all soaked with the blood of innocent victims of senseless killings.

The powerful impact of public debate over such serious issues should not be taken lightly. If the U.S. government is to lead public opinion--rather

than the reverse--it must act with a timely and decisive fashion. The U.S. has a responsibility, as the remaining superpower, to provide diplomatic--and if necessary, military--aid to the world community to prevent future tragedies throughout this new and complex world order.

# APPENDIX A. GRAPHS



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